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Robert W. Webb.

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CŒLEBS

IN SEARCH OF A WIFE.

VOL. I.

Strahan and Preſton,
Printers-Street, London.

CŒLEBS

IN SEARCH OF A WIFE.

COMPREHENDING

OBSERVATIONS

ON

DOMESTIC HABITS AND MANNERS, RELIGION AND MORALS.

By Rev. Hannah More

For not to know at large of things remote
From use, obscure and subtle, but to know
That which before us lies in daily life,
Is the prime wisdom. MILTON.

THE ELEVENTH EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

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IN THE STRAND.

1809.

PREFACE.

When I quitted home, on a little excurſion in the ſpring of this preſent year 1808, a thought ſtruck me, which I began to put into immediate execution. I determined to commit to paper any little circumſtances that might ariſe, and any converſations in which I might be engaged, when the ſubject was at all important, though there might be nothing particularly new or intereſting in the diſcuſſion itſelf.

I fulfilled my intention as occaſions aroſe to furniſh me with materials, and on my return to the North, in the autumn of this ſame year, it was my amuſement on my journey, to look over and arrange theſe papers.

As ſoon as I arrived at my native place, I lent my manuſcript to a confidential friend, as the ſhorteſt way of imparting to him whatever had occurred to me during our ſeparation, together with my reflections on thoſe occurrences. I took care to keep

his expectations low, by apprizing him, that in a tour from my own houſe in Weſtmoreland to the houſe of a friend in Hampſhire, he muſt not look for adventures, but content himſelf with the every-day details of common life, diverſified only by the different habits and tempers of the perſons with whom I had converſed.

He brought back my manuſcript in a few days, with an earneſt wiſh that I would conſent to its publication, aſſuring me that he was of opinion it might not be altogether uſeleſs, not only to young men engaged in the ſame purſuit with myſelf, but to the general reader. He obviated all objections ariſing from my want of leiſure, during my preſent intereſting engagements, by offering to undertake the whole buſineſs himſelf, and to releaſe me from any further trouble, as he was juſt ſetting out for London, where he propoſed paſſing more time than the printing would require.

Thus I am driven to the ſtale apology for publiſhing perhaps what it would have been more prudent to have withheld—*the importunity*

tunity of friends; an apology ſo commonly unfounded, and ſo repeatedly alleged, from the days of John Fauſtus to the publication of Cœlebs.

But whether my friend or my vanity, had the largeſt ſhare of influence, I am willing to indulge the hope that a better motive than either friendſhip or vanity was an operating ingredient in my conſent. Be that as it may—I ſent him my copy "*with all its imperfections on its head.*" It was accompanied by a letter, of which the following extract ſhall conclude theſe ſhort prefatory remarks:

"I here ſend you my manuſcript, with permiſſion to make what uſe of it you pleaſe. By publiſhing it I fear you will draw on me the particular cenſure of two claſſes of critics. The Novel reader will reject it as dull. The religious may throw it aſide as frivolous. The one will accuſe it of exceſſive ſtrictneſs; the other of cenſurable levity. Readers of the former deſcription muſt be ſatisfied with the following brief and general anſwer—

"Had

"Had it been my leading object to have indulged in details that have amuſement only for their end, it might not have been difficult to have produced a work more acceptable to the taſtes accuſtomed to be gratified with ſuch compoſitions. But to entertain that deſcription of readers makes no part of my deſign.

"The perſons with whom I have aſſociated in my excurſion, were, principally, though not excluſively, the family of a country gentleman, and a few of his friends—a narrow field, and unproductive of much variety! The generality of theſe characters move in the quiet and regular courſe of domeſtic life. I found them placed in no difficult ſituations. It was a ſcene rather favourable to reflection than deſcription. Social intercourſe, and not ſtriking events, marked the daily progreſs of my viſit. I had little of pathetic ſcenes or trying circumſtances to work on my own feelings, or, by the relation of them, to work on the feelings of others. My friend's houſe reſembled the reign of ſome pacific ſovereigns. It was the plea-

pleaſanteſt to live in, but its annals were not the moſt ſplendid to record. The periods which make life happy do not always render hiſtory brilliant.

"Great paſſions, therefore, and great trials growing out of them, as I did not witneſs, I have not attempted to delineate. Love itſelf appears in theſe pages, not as an ungovernable impulſe, but as a ſentiment ariſing out of qualities calculated to inſpire attachment in perſons under the dominion of reaſon and religion, brought together by the ordinary courſe of occurrences, in a private family party.

"The familiar converſations of this little ſociety comprehend a conſiderable portion of this ſlender work. The texture of the narrative is ſo ſlight, that it barely ſerves for a ground into which to weave the ſentiments and obſervations which it was deſigned to introduce.

"It may not be unneceſſary to anticipate an objection to which theſe converſations may ſometimes be thought liable. In a few inſtances, the ſpeeches may be charged with

with a degree of ſtiffneſs, and with a length not altogether conſiſtent with familiar dialogue. I muſt apologize for this by obſerving, that when the ſubjects were ſerious, the dialogue would not, in every inſtance, bend to ſuch facilities, nor break into ſuch ſmall parcels, as may eaſily be effected in the diſcuſſion of topics of gayer intercourſe.

"But it is time to meet the objections of the more pious reader, if any ſuch ſhould condeſcend to peruſe this little performance. If it be objected, that religious characters have been too induſtriouſly brought forward, and their faults ſomewhat too ſeverely treated, let it be remembered, that while it is one of the principal objects of the work, to animadvert on thoſe very faults, it has never been done with the inſidious deſign of depreciating the religion, but with the view, by expoſing the fault, to correct the practice. Groſsly vicious characters have ſeldom come in my way, but I had frequent occaſion to obſerve the different ſhapes and ſhades of error in various deſcriptions of ſociety, not only in thoſe worldly

worldly perſons who do not quite leave religion out of their ſcheme, but on the miſtakes and inconſiſtencies of better characters, and even on the errors of ſome who would be aſtoniſhed not to find themſelves reckoned altogether religious. I have not ſo much animadverted on the unavoidable faults and frailties inſeparable from humanity, even in the beſt characters, and which the beſt characters moſt ſenſibly feel, and moſt feelingly deplore, as on thoſe errors which are often tolerated, juſtified, and in ſome inſtances ſyſtematized.

"If I have been altogether deceived in the ambitious hope that theſe pages may not be entirely uſeleſs; if I have failed in my endeavours to ſhew how religion may be brought to mix with the concerns of ordinary life, without impairing its activity, leſſening its cheerfulneſs, or diminiſhing its uſefulneſs; if I have erred in fancying that material defects exiſt in faſhionable education; if I have been wrong in ſuppoſing that females of the higher claſs may combine more domeſtic knowledge with more

intellectual acquirement, that they may be at the same time more knowing and more useful, than has always been thought necessary or compatible;—in short, if I shall be found to have totally disappointed you, my friend, in your too sanguine opinion that some little benefit might arise from the publication, I shall rest satisfied with a low and negative merit. I must be contented with the humble hope that no part of these volumes will be found injurious to the important interests, which it was rather in my wish, than my ability to advance: that where I failed in effecting good, little evil has been done: that if my book has answered no valuable purpose, it has, at least, not added to the number of those publications, which by impairing the virtue, have diminished the happiness of mankind: that if I possessed not talents to promote the cause of Christian morals, I possessed an abhorrence of those principles which lead to their contamination.

"CŒLEBS."

CŒLEBS.

CHAP. I.

I HAVE been ſometimes ſurpriſed when in converſation I have been expreſſing my admiration of the character of Eve in her ſtate of innocence, as drawn by our immortal poet, to hear objections ſtarted by thoſe, from whom of all critics I ſhould have leaſt expected it—the ladies. I confeſs that as the Sophia of Rouſſeau had her young imagination captivated by the character of Fenelon's Telemachus, ſo I early became enamoured of that of Milton's Eve. I never formed an idea of conjugal happineſs, but my mind involuntarily adverted to the graces of that finiſhed picture.

The ladies, in order to juſtify their cenſure, aſſert that Milton, a harſh domeſtic tyrant, muſt needs be a very inadequate judge, and of courſe a very unfair delineator, of female accompliſhments. Theſe fair cavillers draw their inference from premiſes, from which I have always been accuſtomed to deduce a directly contrary concluſion. They inſiſt that it is highly derogatory from the dignity of the ſex, that the poet ſhould affirm that it is the perfection of the character of a wife,

To ſtudy houſehold good,
And good works in her huſband to promote.

Now according to my notion of "houſehold good," which does not include one idea of drudgery or ſervility, but which involves a large and comprehenſive ſcheme of excellence, I will venture to affirm, that let a woman know what ſhe may, yet if ſhe knows not this, ſhe is ignorant of the moſt indiſpenſable, the moſt appropriate branch of female knowledge. Without it, however ſhe

ſhe may inſpire admiration abroad, ſhe will never excite eſteem, nor of courſe durable affection, at home, and will bring neither credit nor comfort to her ill-ſtarred partner.

The domeſtic arrangements of ſuch a woman as filled the capacious mind of the poet, reſemble, if I may ſay it without profaneneſs, thoſe of Providence, whoſe under agent ſhe is. Her wiſdom is ſeen in its effects. Indeed it is rather felt than ſeen. It is ſenſibly acknowledged in the peace, the happineſs, the virtue of the component parts; in the order, regularity and beauty of the whole ſyſtem, of which ſhe is the moving ſpring. The perfection of her character, as the divine poet intimates, does not ariſe from a prominent quality, or a ſhewy talent, or a brilliant accompliſhment, but it is the beautiful combination and reſult of them all. Her excellencies conſiſt not ſo much in acts as in habits, in

> Thoſe thouſand decencies which daily flow
> From all her words and actions.

A deſcription more calculated than any I ever met with, to convey an idea of the pureſt conduct reſulting from the beſt principles. It gives an image of that tranquillity, ſmoothneſs, and quiet beauty, which is of the very eſſence of perfection in a wife; while the happily choſen verb *flow* takes away any impreſſion of dulneſs, or ſtagnant torpor, which the *ſtill* idea might otherwiſe ſuggeſt.

But the offence taken by the ladies againſt the uncourtly bard is chiefly occaſioned by his having preſumed to intimate that conjugal obedience

Is woman's higheſt honour and her praiſe.

This is ſo nice a point that I, as a bachelor, dare only juſt hint, that on this delicate queſtion the poet has not gone an inch farther than the apoſtle. Nay, Paul is ſtill more uncivilly explicit than Milton. If however, I could hope to bring over to my ſide critics, who, being of the party, are too apt to prejudge the cauſe, I would point out to them that the ſuppoſed harſhneſs of the

the obſervation is quite done away by the recollection that this ſcrupled "obedience" is ſo far from implying degradation, that it is connected with the injunction to the woman "to promote good works" in her huſband; an injunction ſurely inferring a degree of influence that raiſes her condition, and reſtores her to all the dignity of equality; it makes her not only the aſſociate but the inſpirer of his virtues.

But to return to the economical part of the character of Eve. And here ſhe exhibits a conſummate ſpecimen and beautiful model of domeſtic ſkill and elegance. How exquiſitely conceived is her reception and entertainment of Raphael! How modeſt and yet how dignified! I am afraid I know ſome huſbands who would have had to encounter very ungracious looks, not to ſay words, if they had brought home even an angel, *unexpectedly* to dinner. Not ſo our general mother.

Her diſpatchful looks,
Her hoſpitable thoughts,——intent
What choice to chuſe for delicacy beſt,

all indicate not only the "prompt" but the cheerful "obedience." Though her repaſt conſiſted only of the fruits of Paradiſe,

Whatever earth, all bearing mother yields:

Yet of theſe, with a liberal hoſpitality,

She gathers tribute large, and on the board
Heaps with unſparing hand.

The fineſt modern lady need not diſdain the arrangement of her table, which was

So contrived as not to mix
Taſtes not well joined, inelegant, but bring
Taſte after taſte, upheld by kindlieſt change.

It muſt, however, I fear be conceded, by the way, that this "taſte *after* taſte" rather holds out an encouragement to ſecond courſes.

When this unmatched trio had finiſhed their repaſt which, let it be obſerved, before they taſted, Adam acknowledged that

Theſe bounties from our *Nouriſher* are given
From whom all perfect good deſcends,

Milton,

Milton, with great liberality to that ſex againſt which he is accuſed of ſo much ſeverity, obligingly permitted Eve to ſit much longer after dinner, than moſt modern huſbands would allow. She had attentively liſtened to all the hiſtorical and moral ſubjects ſo divinely diſcuſſed between the firſt Angel and the firſt Man; and perhaps there can ſcarcely be found a more beautiful trait of a delicately attentive wife, than ſhe exhibits, by withdrawing at the exact point of propriety. She does not retire in conſequence of any look or geſture, any broad ſign of impatience, much leſs any command or intimation of her huſband; but with the ever watchful eye of vigilant affection and deep humility:

> When by his countenance he ſeemed
> Entering on thoughts abſtruſe,

inſtructed only by her own quick intuition of what was right and delicate, ſhe withdrew. And here again how admirably does the poet ſuſtain her intellectual dig-

nity ſoftened by a moſt tender ſtroke of conjugal affection,

> Yet went ſhe not, as not with ſuch diſcourſe
> Delighted, or not capable her ear
> Of what was high—ſuch pleaſure ſhe reſerved,
> Adam relating, ſhe ſole auditreſs——.

On peruſing, however, the tete-a-tete which her abſence occaſioned, methinks I hear ſome ſprightly lady, freſh from the Royal Inſtitution, expreſs her wonder why Eve ſhould be baniſhed by her huſband from Raphael's fine lecture on aſtronomy which follows; was not ſhe as capable as Adam of underſtanding all he ſaid, of

> Cycle and Epicycle, Orb on Orb?

If, however, the imaginary fair objector will take the trouble to read to the end of the eighth book of this immortal work, it will raiſe in her eſtimation both the poet and the heroine, when ſhe contemplates the juſt propriety of her being abſent before Adam enters on the account of the formation, beauty and attractions of his wife, and of his own love and admiration.

She will farther obſerve, in her progreſs through this divine poem, that the author is ſo far from making Eve a mere domeſtic drudge, an unpoliſhed houſewife, that he pays an invariable attention even to external elegance, in his whole delineation, aſcribing grace to her ſteps and dignity to her geſture. He uniformly keeps up the ſame combination of intellectual worth and poliſhed manners;

For ſoftneſs ſhe, and ſweet attractive grace.

And her huſband, ſo far from a churliſh inſenſibility to her perfections, politely calls her

Daughter of God and Man, *accompliſhed* Eve.

I will not, however, affirm that Adam, or even Milton, annexed to the term *accompliſhed* preciſely the idea with which it is aſſociated in the mind of a true modern-bred lady.

If it be objected to the poet's gallantry, that he remarks

How beauty is excelled by manly grace,
And wiſdom, which alone is truly fair;

let

let it be remembered that the obſervation proceeds from the lips of Eve herſelf, and thus adds to her other graces, the crowning grace of humility.

But it is high time that I ſhould proceed from my criticiſm to myſelf. The connection and of courſe the tranſition will be found more natural than may appear, till developed by my ſlight narrative.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

I AM a young man, not quite four and twenty, of an ancient and reſpectable family, and conſiderable eſtate in one of the northern counties. Soon after I had completed my ſtudies in the univerſity of Edinburgh, my father fell into a lingering illneſs. I attended him with an aſſiduity which was richly rewarded by the leſſons of wiſdom, and the example of piety, which I daily received from him. After languiſhing about a year, I loſt him, and in him the moſt affectionate father, the moſt enlightened companion, and the moſt chriſtian friend.

The grief of my mother was ſo poignant, and ſo laſting, that I could never prevail on myſelf to leave her, even for the ſake of attaining thoſe advantages and enjoying thoſe pleaſures, which may be reaped by a wider range of obſervation, by a more extended

tended ſurvey of the multifarious taſtes, habits, purſuits, and characters of general ſociety. I felt with Mr. Gray, that we can never have but one mother, and poſtponed from time to time the moment of leaving home.

I was her only child, and though it was now her ſole remaining wiſh to ſee me happily married, yet I was deſirous of firſt putting myſelf in a ſituation which might afford me a more extenſive field of enquiry, before I ventured to take ſo irretrieveable a ſtep, a ſtep which might perhaps affect my happineſs in both worlds. But time did not hang heavy on my hands; if I had little ſociety, I had many books. My father had left me a copious library, and I had learnt from him to ſelect whatever was moſt valuable in that beſt ſpecies of literature, which tends to form the principles, the underſtanding, the taſte, and the character. My father had paſſed the early part of his life in the gay and buſy world; and our domeſtic ſociety in the country had been

been occaſionally enlivened by viſits from ſome of his London friends, men of ſenſe and learning, and ſome of them men of piety.

My mother, when ſhe was in tolerable ſpirits, was now frequently deſcribing the kind of woman whom ſhe wiſhed me to marry. "I am ſo firmly perſuaded, Charles," would ſhe kindly ſay, "of the juſtneſs of your taſte, and the rectitude of your principles, that I am not much afraid that you will be miſled by the captivating exterior of any woman who is greatly deficient either in ſenſe or conduct; but remember my ſon, that there are many women againſt whoſe characters there lies nothing very objectionable, who are yet little calculated to taſte, or to communicate rational happineſs. Do not indulge romantic ideas of ſuper-human excellence. Remember that the faireſt creature is a fallen creature. Yet let not your ſtandard be low. If it be abſurd to expect perfection, it is not unreaſonable to expect *conſiſtency*. Do not ſuffer yourſelf to be caught by a ſhining quality, till you

you know it is not counteracted by the oppoſite defect. Be not taken in by ſtrictneſs in one point, till you are aſſured there is no laxity in others. In character, as in architecture, proportion is beauty. The education of the preſent race of females is not very favourable to domeſtic happineſs. For my own part I call education, not that which ſmothers a woman with accompliſhments, but that which tends to conſolidate a firm and regular ſyſtem of character; that which tends to form a friend, a companion, and a wife. I call education, not that which is made up of the ſhreds and patches of uſeleſs arts, but that which inculcates principles, poliſhes taſte, regulates temper, cultivates reaſon, ſubdues the paſſions, directs the feelings, habituates to reflection, trains to ſelf-denial, and more eſpecially, that which refers all actions, feelings, ſentiments, taſtes, and paſſions, to the love and fear of God."

I had yet had little opportunity of contraſting the charms of my native place with the leſs wild and romantic beauties of the ſouth.

ſouth. I was paſſionately fond of the ſcenery that ſurrounded me, which had never yet loſt that power of pleaſing, which it is commonly imagined that novelty can alone confer.

The Priory, a handſome Gothic manſion, ſtands in the middle of a park, not extenſive but beautifully varied. Behind are lofty mountains, the feet of which are covered with a wood that deſcends almoſt to the houſe. On one ſide a narrow cultivated valley winds among the mountains; the bright variegated tints of its meadows and corn fields, with here and there a little white cottage, emboſomed in trees, are finely contraſted with the awful and impaſſable fells which contain it.

An inconſiderable but impetuous river ruſhes from the mountains above, through this unadorned but enchanting little valley, and paſſes through the Park at a diſtance of about a hundred yards from the houſe. The ground falls beautifully down to it; and on the other ſide is a fine wood of birch

birch overhanging the river, which is here croſſed by a ſmall ruſtic bridge: after being enlarged by many ſtreams from the neighbouring hills it runs about half a mile to the lake below, which, from the front of the houſe, is ſeen in full beauty. It is a noble expanſe of water. The mountains that ſurround it are ſome of them covered with wood, ſome ſkirted with cultivation, ſome rocky and barren to the water's edge; while the rugged ſummits of them all preſent every variety of fantaſtic outline. Towards the head of the lake a neat little village ornaments the banks, and wonderfully harmonizes with the ſimple beauty of the ſcene. At an opening among the hills, a view is caught of the diſtant country, a wide vale richly wooded, adorned every where with towns, villages, and gentlemen's houſes, and backed by ſublime mountains, rivalling in height, though not in their broken and Alpine forms, thoſe that more immediately ſurround us.

While

While I was thus dividing my time between the enjoyment of this exquisite scenery, my books, the care of my affairs, my filial attentions, and my religious duties, I was suddenly deprived of my inestimable mother. She died the death of the righteous.

Addison has finely touched on the singular sort of delicate and refined tenderness of a father for a daughter; but I am persuaded that there is no affection of the human heart more exquisitely pure than that which is felt by a grateful son towards a mother, who fostered his infancy with fondness, watched over his childhood with anxiety, and his youth with an interest compounded of all that is tender, wise, and pious.

My retirement was now become solitude; the former is, I believe, the best state for the mind of man, the latter almost the worst. In complete solitude the eye wants objects, the heart wants attachments, the understanding wants reciprocation. The character loses its tenderness when it has nothing to love, its firmness when it has

none to ſtrengthen it, its ſweetneſs when it has nothing to ſoothe it; its patience when it meets no contradiction, its humility when it is ſurrounded by dependants, and its delicacy in the converſation of the uninformed. Where the intercourſe is very unequal, ſociety is ſomething worſe than ſolitude.

I had naturally a keen reliſh for domeſtic happineſs; and this propenſity had been cheriſhed by what I had ſeen and enjoyed in my father's family. Home was the ſcene in which my imagination had pictured the only delights worthy of a rational, feeling, intellectual, immortal man;

—— ſole bliſs of Paradiſe
Which has ſurviv'd the fall.

This inclination had been much increaſed by my father's turn of converſation. He often ſaid to me, "I know your domeſtic propenſities; and I know, therefore, that the whole colour of your future life will be, in a particular manner, determined by the turn of mind of the woman you may marry. Were you to live in the buſy haunts of men;

men; were you of any profeſſion, or likely to be engaged in public life, though I would ſtill counſel you to be equally careful in your choice, yet your happineſs would not ſo immediately, ſo excluſively depend on the individual ſociety of a woman, as that of a retired country gentleman muſt do. A man of ſenſe, who loves home, and lives at home, requires a wife who can and will be at half the expence of mind neceſſary for keeping up the cheerful, animated, elegant intercourſe which forms ſo great a part of the bond of union between intellectual and well bred perſons. Had your mother been a woman of an uninformed, inelegant mind, virtuous and pious as ſhe is, what abatement muſt there have been in the bleſſings of my lot! The *exhibiting*, the *diſplaying* wife way entertain your company, but it is only the informed, the refined, the cultivated woman who can entertain yourſelf; and I preſume whenever you marry you will marry primarily for yourſelf, and not for your friends: you will want a COMPANION: an ARTIST you may hire.

"But remember, Charles, that when I am inſiſting ſo much on mental delicacy, I am aſſuming that all is right in ſtill more eſſential points. Do not be contented with this ſuperſtructure, till you have aſcertained the ſolidity of the foundation. The ornaments which decorate, do not ſupport the edifice! Guarded as you are by chriſtian principles, and confirmed in virtuous habits, I truſt you may ſafely look abroad into the world. Do not, however, irrevocably diſpoſe of your affections till you have made the long-promiſed viſit to my earlieſt, wiſeſt, and beſt friend Mr. Stanley. I am far from deſiring that your friend ſhould direct your choice. It is what even your father would not do: but he will be the moſt faithful and moſt diſintereſted of counſellors."

I reſolved now for a few months to leave the priory, the ſeat of my anceſtors, to make a tour not only to London, but to Stanley Grove, in Hampſhire, the reſidence of my father's friend; a viſit I was about to make with him juſt before his laſt illneſs. He wiſhed

wiſhed me to go alone, but I could not prevail on myſelf to deſert his ſick-bed for any ſcheme of amuſement.

I began to long earneſtly for the pleaſures of converſation, pleaſures which, in our ſmall, but ſocial and ſelect circle of cultivated friends, I had been accuſtomed to enjoy. I am aware that certain fine town-bred men would ridicule the bare mention of learned and poliſhed converſation at a village in Weſtmoreland, or indeed at any place out of the precincts of the metropolis; juſt as a London phyſician, or lawyer, ſmile ſupercilliouſly at the ſuggeſted merits of a profeſſional brother in a provincial town. Good ſenſe, however, is of all countries, and even knowledge is not altogether a mere local advantage. Theſe, and not the topics of the hour, furniſh the beſt raw materials for working up an improving intercourſe.

It muſt be confeſſed, however, as I have ſince found, that for giving a terſeneſs and a poliſh to converſation: for rubbing out

prejudices; for correcting egotiſm; for keeping ſelf importance out of ſight, if not curing it; for bringing a man to condenſe what he has to ſay, if he intends to be liſtened to; for accuſtoming him to endure oppoſition; for teaching him not to think every man who differs from him in matters of taſte, a fool, and in politics, a knave; for cutting down harangues; for guarding him from producing as novelties and inventions, what has been ſaid a thouſand times; for quickneſs of alluſion, which brings the idea before you without detail or quotation; nothing is equal to the miſcellaneous ſociety of London. The advantages too which it poſſeſſes, in being the ſeat of the court, the parliament, and the courts of law, as well as the common centre of arts and talents of every kind, all theſe raiſe it above every other ſcene of intellectual improvement, or colloquial pleaſure, perhaps in the whole world.

But this was only the ſecondary motive of my intended migration. I connected with

with it the hope, that in a more extended ſurvey, I might be more likely to ſelect a deſerving companion for life. "In ſuch a companion," ſaid I, as I drove along in my poſt chaiſe, "I do not want a Helen, a Saint Cecilia, or a Madame Dacier; yet ſhe muſt be elegant or I ſhould not love her; ſenſible, or I ſhould not reſpect her; prudent, or I could not confide in her; well-informed, or ſhe could not educate my children; well-bred, or ſhe could not entertain my friends; *conſiſtent*, or I ſhould offend the ſhade of my mother; pious, or I ſhould not be happy with her, becauſe the prime comfort in a companion for life, is the delightful hope that ſhe will be a companion for eternity."

After this ſoliloquy, I was frightened to reflect that ſo much was requiſite; and yet when I began to conſider in which article I could make any abatement, I was willing to perſuade myſelf that my requiſitions were moderate.

CHAP. III.

I HAD occaſionally viſited two or three families in our own county, who were ſaid to make a very genteel appearance on narrow fortunes. As I was known not to conſider money as a principal conſideration, it had often been intimated to me what excellent wives the daughters of theſe families would make, becauſe on a very ſlender allowance their appearance was as elegant as that of women of ten times their expectations. I tranſlated this reſpectable appearance into a language not the moſt favourable, as I inſtantly inferred, and afterwards was convinced, that this perſonal figure was made by the ſacrifice of their whole time to thoſe decorations which procured them credit by putting their outward figure on a par with the moſt affluent. If a girl with a thouſand pounds rivals in her dreſs one with ten thouſand, is it not obvious, that not only

all

all her time muſt be employed, but all her money devoted to this one object? Nothing but the clippings and parings from her perſonal adornments could enable her to ſupply the demands of charity; and theſe ſacrifices, it is evident ſhe is not diſpoſed to make.

Another inducement ſuggeſted to me was, that theſe young ladies would make the better wives, becauſe they had never been corrupted by the expenſive pleaſures of London, and had not been ſpoilt by the gay ſcenes of diſſipation which it afforded. This argument would have weighed powerfully with me, had I not obſerved, that they never abſtained from any amuſement in the country that came within their reach.

I naturally inferred, that ſhe who eagerly graſped at every petty provincial diſſipation, would with increaſed alacrity have plunged into the more alluring gaieties of the metropolis had it been in her power. I thought ſhe had even leſs apology to plead than the town lady; 'the fault was equal, while the tempt-

temptation was leſs; and ſhe who was as diſſipated as her limited bounds permitted, where there was little to attract, would, I feared, be as diſſipated as ſhe poſſibly could be, when her temptations were multiplied, and her facilities increaſed.

I had met with ſeveral young ladies of a higher deſcription, daughters of our country gentlemen, a claſs which furniſhes a number of valuable and elegant women. Some of theſe, whom I knew, ſeemed unexceptionable in manner and in mind. They had ſeen ſomething of the world, without having been ſpoilt by it; had read with advantage; and acquitted themſelves well in the duties which they had been called to practiſe. But I was withheld from cultivating that degree of intimacy which would have enabled me to take an exact meaſure of their minds, by the injunction of my father, that I would never attach myſelf to any woman till I had ſeen and conſulted Mr. Stanley. This direction, which, like all his wiſhes, was a law to me, operated

operated as a ſort of ſedative in the ſlight intercourſe I had had with the ladies; and, reſolving to poſtpone all ſuch intimacy as might have led to attachment, I did not allow myſelf to come near enough to feel with intereſt, or to judge with deciſion.

As ſoon as I got to town I viſited ſome of my father's friends. I was kindly received for his ſake, and at their houſes ſoon enlarged the ſphere of my acquaintance. I was concerned to remark that two or three gentlemen whom I had obſerved to be very regular in their attendance on public worſhip in the country, ſeldom went to church in London; in the afternoon never. "Religion," they ſaid, by way of apology, "was entirely a thing of example, it was of great political importance, ſociety was held together by the reſtraints it impoſed on the lower orders. When they were in the country it was highly proper that their tenants and workmen ſhould have the benefit of their example, but in London the caſe was different. Where there were ſo many churches,

churches, no one knew whether you went or not, and where no ſcandal was given no harm was done." As this was a logic which had not found its way into my father's religion, I was not convinced by it. I remember Mr. Burke, ſpeaking of the Engliſh, who were ſo humane at home, and whom he unjuſtly accuſed of wanting humanity in India, ſays, "that the humanity of Britain is a humanity of points and parallels." Surely the religion of the gentlemen in queſtion is not leſs a geographical diſtinction.

This error, I conceive, ariſes from religion being too much conſidered as a mere inſtitution of decorum, of convention, of ſociety; and not as an inſtitution founded on the condition of human nature, a covenant of mercy for repairing the evils which ſin has produced. It ſprings from the want of a conviction that chriſtianity is an individual as well as general concern; that religion is a perſonal thing, previous to its being a matter of example; that a man is not infallibly ſaved or loſt as a portion of any

any family, or any church, or any community; but that as he is individually responsible, he must be individually brought to a deep and humbling sense of his own personal wants, without taking any refuge in the piety he may see around him, of which he will have no benefit, if he be no partaker.

I regretted, even for inferior reasons, the little distinction which was paid to the sacred day. To say nothing of the elevating views which the soul acquires from devoting itself to its proper object; the man of business, methinks, should rejoice in its return; the politician should welcome its appearance, not only as a rest from anxiety and labour, but as an occasion of cooling and quieting the mind, of softening its irritation, of allaying its ferment, and thus restoring the repaired faculties and invigorated spirits to the demands of the succeeding week, in a frame of increased aptitude for meeting its difficulties and encountering its duties.

The first person whom I visited was a good-

good-natured, friendly man, whom I had occaſionally ſeen in the North. As I had no reaſon to believe that he was religious, in the true ſenſe of the word, I had no intention of looking for a wife in his family. I, however, thought it not amiſs, to aſſociate a little with perſons of different deſcriptions, that by a wider range I might learn to correct my general judgment, as well as to guide my particular purſuit. Nothing it is true would tempt me to ſelect a woman on whoſe pious diſpoſitions I could not form a reaſonable dependence; yet to come at the reality of thoſe diſpoſitions was no eaſy matter.

I had heard my father remark, that he had, more than once, known a right-minded girl, who ſeemed to have been firſt taught of heaven, and afterwards ſupported in her Chriſtian courſe under almoſt every human diſadvantage; who boldly, but meekly, maintained her own principles, under all the hourly temptations and oppoſition of a worldly and irreligious family, and who had given the beſt evidence of her piety towards God,

God, by her patient forbearance towards her erring friends. Such women had made admirable wives when they were afterwards tranſplanted into families where their virtues were underſtood, and their piety cheriſhed. While, on the other hand, he had known others, who accuſtomed from childhood to the ſober habits of family religion, under pious but injudicious parents, had fallen in mechanically with the domeſtic practices, without having ever been inſtructed in Chriſtian principles, or having ever manifeſted any religious tendencies. The implantation of a new principle never having been inculcated, the religious habit has degenerated into a mere form, the parents acting as if they thought that religion muſt come by nature or infection in a religious family. Theſe girls, having never had their own hearts impreſſed, nor their own characters diſtinctly conſidered, nor individually cultivated, but being taken out as a portion from the maſs, have afterwards taken the caſt and colour of any ſociety into which they

they have happened to be thrown; and they who before had lived religiouſly with the religious, have afterwards aſſimilated with the gay and diſſipated, when thus thrown into their company, as cordially as if they had never been habituated to better things.

At dinner there appeared two pretty looking young ladies, daughters of my friend, who had been ſome time a widower. I placed myſelf between them for the purpoſe of prying a little into their minds, while the reſt of the company were converſing on indifferent ſubjects. Having formerly heard this gentleman's deceaſed wife extolled as the mirror of managers, and the arrangements of his table highly commended, I was ſurpriſed to ſee it ſo ill appointed, and every thing wearing marks of palpable inelegance. Though no epicure, I could not forbear obſerving that many of the diſhes were out of ſeaſon, ill choſen, and ill dreſſed.

While I was puzzling my head for a ſolution, I recollected that I had lately read in a moſt reſpectable periodical work, a pa-

per (compoſed, I believe, however by a raw recruit of that well diſciplined corps) which inſiſted that nothing tended to make ladies ſo uſeleſs and inefficient in the *menage* as the ſtudy of the dead languages. I jumped to the concluſion, and was in an inſtant perſuaded that my young hoſteſſes muſt not only be perfect miſtreſſes of Latin, but the *tout enſemble* was ſo ill arranged as to induce me to give them full credit for Greek alſo.

Finding, therefore, that my appetite was baulked, I took comfort in the certainty that my underſtanding would be well regaled; and after ſecretly regretting that learning ſhould ſo effectually deſtroy uſefulneſs, I was reſolved to derive intellectual comfort from this too claſſical repaſt. Turning ſuddenly to the eldeſt lady, I aſked her at once if ſhe did not think Virgil the fineſt poet in the world. She bluſhed, and thus confirmed me in the opinion that her modeſty was equal to her erudition. I repeated my queſtion with a little circumlocution. She ſtared and ſaid ſhe had never heard of

the perſon I mentioned, but that ſhe had read Tears of Senſibility, and Roſa Matilda, and Sympathy of Souls, and Too Civil by Half, and the Sorrows of Werter, and the Stranger, and the Orphans of Snowdon.

"Yes, Sir," joined in the younger ſiſter, who did not riſe to ſo high a pitch of literature, "and we have read Perfidy Puniſhed, and Jemmy and Jenny Jeſſamy, and the Fortunate Footman, and the Illuſtrious Chambermaid." I bluſhed and ſtared in my turn; and here the converſation, through the difficulty of our being intelligible to each other, dropped; and I am perſuaded that I ſunk much lower in their eſteem for not being acquainted with their favorite authors, than they did in mine for having never heard of Virgil.

I roſe from the table with a full conviction that it is very poſſible for a woman to be totally ignorant of the ordinary but indiſpenſible duties of common life without knowing one word of Latin; and that her being

being a bad companion is no infallible proof of her being a good economiſt.

I am afraid the poor father ſaw ſomething of my diſappointment in my countenance, for when we were alone in the evening, he obſerved, that a heavy addition to his other cauſes of regret for the loſs of his wife, was her excellent management of his family. I found afterwards, that though ſhe had brought him a great fortune, ſhe had had a very low education. Her father, a coarſe country eſquire, to whom the pleaſures of the table were the only pleaſures for which he had any reliſh, had no other ambition for his daughter, but that ſhe ſhould be the moſt famous houſewife in the country. He gloried in her culinary perfections, which he underſtood; of the deficiencies of her mind he had not the leaſt perception. Money and good eating, he owned, were the only things in life which had a real intrinſic value; the value of all other things, he declared, exiſted in the imagination only.

The poor lady, when she became a mother, and was brought out into the world, felt keenly the deficiencies of her own education. The dread of Scylla, as is usual, wrecked her on Charybdis. Her first resolution, as soon as she had daughters, was that they should *learn every thing*. All the masters who teach things of little intrinsic use were extravagantly paid for supernumerary attendance; and as no one in the family was capable of judging of their improvements, their progress was but slow. Though they were taught much, they learnt but little, even of these unnecessary things; and of things necessary they learnt nothing. Their well-intentioned mother was not aware that her daughters' education was almost as much calculated to gratify the senses, though in a different way, and with more apparent refinement, as her own had been; and that *mind* is left nearly as much out of the question in making an ordinary artist as in making a good cook.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

FROM my fondneſs for converſation, my imagination had been early fired with Dr. Johnſon's remark, that there is no pleaſure on earth comparable to the *fine full flow of London talk*. I, who, ſince I had quitted college, had ſeldom had my mind refreſhed, but with the petty rills and penurious ſtreams of knowlege which country ſociety afforded, now expected to meet it in a ſtrong and rapid current, fertilizing whereever it flowed, producing in abundance the rich fruits of argument, and the gay flowers of rhetoric. I looked for an uninterrupted courſe of profit and delight. I flattered myſelf that every dinner would add to my ſtock of images; that every debate would clear up ſome difficulty, every diſcuſſion elucidate ſome truth; that every alluſion would be purely claſſical, every ſentence

abound with inſtruction, and every period be pointed with wit.

On the tiptoe of expectation I went to dine with Sir John Belfield, in Cavendiſh-ſquare. I looked at my watch fifty times. I thought it would never be ſix o'clock. I did not care to ſhew my country breeding, by going too early, to incommode my friend, nor my town breeding, by going too late, and ſpoiling his dinner. Sir John is a valuable, elegant minded man, and, next to Mr. Stanley, ſtood higheſt in my father's eſteem for his mental accompliſhments and correct morals. As I knew he was remarkable for aſſembling at his table men of ſenſe, taſte, and learning, my expectations of pleaſure were very high. "Here at leaſt" ſaid I, as I heard the name of one clever man announced after another, "here, at leaſt, I cannot fail to find

The feaſt of reaſon and the flow of ſoul.

Here, at leaſt, all the energies of my mind will be brought into exerciſe. From this ſociety I ſhall carry away documents for the improvement of my taſte; I ſhall treaſure

ſure up hints to enrich the underſtanding, and collect aphoriſms for the conduct of life.

At firſt there was no fair opportunity to introduce any converſation beyond the topics of the day, and to thoſe it muſt be confeſſed, this eventful period gives a new and powerful intereſt. I ſhould have been much pleaſed to have had my country politics rectified, and any prejudices, which I might have contracted, removed or ſoftened, could the diſcuſſion have been carried on without the frequent interruption of the youngeſt man in the company. This gentleman broke in on every remark, by deſcanting ſucceſſively on the merits of the various diſhes; and, if it be true that experience only can determine the judgment, he gave proof of that beſt right to peremptory deciſion, by not truſting to deluſive theory, but by actually eating of every diſh at table.

His animadverſions were uttered with the gravity of a German philoſopher, and the ſcience of a French cook. If any of his opinions happened to be controverted, he

quoted in confirmation of his own judgment, *l'Almanac des Gourmands*, which he assured us was the most valuable work that had appeared in France since the revolution. The author of this book he seemed to consider of as high authority in the science of eating, as Coke or Hale in that of jurisprudence, or Quintilian in the art of criticism. To the credit of the company however, be it spoken, he had the whole of this topic to himself. The rest of the party were in general, of quite a different calibre, and as little acquainted with his favourite author, as he probably was with theirs.

The lady of the house was perfectly amiable and well bred. Her dinner was excellent, and every thing about her had an air of elegance and splendour: of course she completely escaped the disgrace of being thought a scholar, but not the suspicion of having a very good taste. I longed for the removal of the cloth, and was eagerly anticipating the pleasure and improvement that awaited me.

As

As soon as the servants were beginning to withdraw, we got into a sort of attitude of conversation; all except the eulogist of l'Almanac des Gourmands, who, wrapping himself up in the comfortable consciousness of his own superior judgement, and a little piqued that he had found neither support nor opposition (the next best thing to a professed talker), he seemed to have a perfect indifference to all topics except that on which he had shewn so much eloquence with so little effect.

The last tray was now carried out, the last lingering servant had retired. I was beginning to listen with all my powers of attention, to an ingenious gentleman who was about to give an interesting account of Egypt, where he had spent a year, and from whence he was lately returned. He was just got to the catacombs,

when on a sudden open fly,
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,

the mahogany folding doors, and in at once struggling who should be first, rushed half a dozen

a dozen children, lovely, freſh, gay, and noiſy. This ſudden and violent irruption of the pretty barbarians neceſſarily cauſed a total interruption of converſation. The ſprightly creatures ran round the table to chuſe where they would ſit. At length this great difficulty of courts and cabinets, *the choice of places*, was ſettled. The little things were joſtled in between the ladies, who all contended who ſhould get poſſeſſion of the *little beauties*. One was in raptures with the roſy cheeks of a ſweet girl ſhe held in her lap. A ſecond exclaimed aloud at the beautiful lace with which the frock of another was trimmed, and which ſhe was ſure mamma had given her for being ſo good. A profitable and doubtleſs a laſting and inſeparable aſſociation was thus formed in the child's mind between lace and goodneſs. A third cried out, "look at the pretty angel!—do but obſerve—her bracelets are as blue as her eyes. Did you ever ſee ſuch a match? "Surely, lady Belfield," cried a fourth,

"you

"you carried the eyes to the ſhop, or there muſt have been a ſhade of difference." I myſelf, who am paſſionately fond of children, eyed the ſweet little rebels with complacency, notwithſtanding the unſeaſonableneſs of their interruption.

At laſt, when they were all diſpoſed of, I reſumed my enquiries about the reſting place of the mummies. But the grand diſpute who ſhould have oranges and who ſhould have almonds and raiſins, ſoon raiſed ſuch a clamour that it was impoſſible to hear my Egyptian friend. This great conteſt was, however, at length ſettled, and I was returning to the antiquities of Memphis, when the important point, who ſhould have red wine, and who ſhould have white, who ſhould have half a glaſs, and who a whole one, ſet us again in an uproar. Sir John was viſibly uneaſy, and commanded ſilence. During this interval of peace, I gave up the catacombs and took refuge in the pyramids. But I had no ſooner propoſed my queſtion about the ſerpent ſaid to be found in one of them, than the

the ſon and heir, a fine little fellow juſt ſix years old, reaching out his arm to dart an apple acroſs the table at his ſiſter, roguiſhly intending to overſet her glaſs, unluckily overthrew his own, brimfull of port wine. The whole contents were diſcharged on the elegant drapery of a white robed nymph.

All was now agitation and diſtreſs, and diſturbance and confuſion, the gentlemen ringing for napkins, the ladies aſſiſting the dripping fair one; each vying with the other who ſhould recommend the moſt approved ſpecific for getting out the ſtain of red wine, and comforting the ſufferer by ſtories of ſimilar misfortunes. The poor little culprit was diſmiſſed, and all difficulties and diſaſters ſeemed at laſt ſurmounted. But you cannot heat up again an intereſt which has been ſo often cooled. The thread of converſation had been ſo frequently broken, that I deſpaired of ſeeing it tied together again. I ſorrowfully gave up catacombs, pyramids, and ſerpent, and was obliged to content myſelf with a little

deſultory

desultory chat with my next neighbour; sorry and disappointed to glean only a few scattered ears, where I had expected so abundant a harvest; and the day from which I had promised myself so much benefit and delight passed away with a very slender acquisition of either.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

I WENT almoſt immediately after, at the invitation of Mr. Ranby, to paſs a few days at his villa at Hampſtead. Mr. and Mrs. Ranby were eſteemed pious perſons, buhaving riſen to great affluence by a ſudden turn of fortune in a commercial engagement, they had a little ſelf-ſufficiency, and not a little diſpoſition to aſcribe an undue importance to wealth. This I ſhould have thought more pardonable under their circumſtances, had I not expected that religion would in this reſpect have more than ſupplied the deficiencies of education. Their religion, however, conſiſted almoſt excluſively in a diſproportionate zeal for a very few doctrines. And though they were far from being immoral in their own practice, yet in their diſcourſe they affected to undervalue morality.

This was, indeed, more particularly the caſe with the lady, whoſe chief object of diſcourſe ſeemed to be, to convince me of her great ſuperiority to her huſband in polemical ſkill. Her chaſte converſation certainly was not coupled with fear. In one reſpect ſhe was the very reverſe of thoſe Phariſees who were ſcrupulouſly exact about their petty obſervances. Mrs. Ranby was, on the contrary, anxious about a very few important particulars, and exonerated herſelf from the neceſſity of all inferior attentions. She was ſtrongly attached to one or two preachers, and diſcovered little candour for all others, or for thoſe who attended them. Nay, ſhe ſomewhat doubted of the ſoundneſs of the faith of her friends and acquaintance, who would not incur great inconvenience to attend one or other of her favourites.

Mrs. Ranby's table was "more than hoſpitably good." There was not the leaſt ſuſpicion of Latin here. The eulogiſt of female ignorance might have dined in comfortable ſecurity againſt the intruſion and vanity

vanity of erudition. She had three daughters, not unpleaſing young women. But I was much concerned to obſerve that they were not only dreſſed to the very extremity of the faſhion, but their drapery was as tranſparent, as ſhort, and as ſcanty, there was as ſedulous a diſcloſure of their perſons, and as great a redundancy of ornaments, as I had ſeen in the gayeſt circles.

"Expect not perfection," ſaid my good mother, "but look for *conſiſtency*." This principle my parents had not only taught me in the cloſet, but had illuſtrated by their deportment in the family and in the world. They obſerved a uniform correctneſs in their general demeanor. They were not over anxious about character for its own ſake, but they were tenderly vigilant not to bring any reproach on the Chriſtian name by imprudence, negligence, or inconſiſtency, even in ſmall things. "Cuſtom," ſaid my mother, "can never alter the immutable nature of right; faſhion can never juſtify any practice which is improper in itſelf; and to dreſs

dreſs indecently is as great an offence againſt purity and modeſty, when it is the faſhion, as when it is obſolete. There ſhould be a line of demarcation ſomewhere. In the article of dreſs and appearance, Chriſtian mothers ſhould make a ſtand. They ſhould not be ſo unreaſonable as to expect that a young girl will of herſelf have courage to oppoſe the united temptations of faſhion without, and the ſecret prevalence of corruption within; and authority ſhould be called in where admonition fails."

The converſation after dinner took a religious turn. Mrs. Ranby was not unacquainted with the ſubject, and expreſſed herſelf with energy on many ſerious points. I could have been glad, however, to have ſeen her views a little more practical; and her ſpirit a little leſs cenſorious. I ſaw ſhe took the lead in debate, and that Mr. Ranby ſubmitted to act as ſubaltern, but whether his meekneſs was the effect of piety or fear I could not at that time determine. She proteſted vehemently againſt all diſ-

ſipation, in which I cordially joined her, though I hope with ſomething leſs intemperance of manner and leſs acrimony againſt thoſe who purſued it. I began however, to hope that her faults aroſe chiefly from a bad judgment, and an ill regulated mind. In many reſpects ſhe ſeemed well intentioned, though her language was a little debaſed by coarſeneſs, and not a little diſfigured by aſperity.

I was ſorry to obſerve that the young ladies not only took no part in the converſation, but that they did not even ſeem to know what was going on, and I muſt confeſs the *manner* in which it was conducted was not calculated to make the ſubject intereſting. The girls ſat jogging and whiſpering each other, and got away as faſt as they could.

As ſoon as they were withdrawn—"There Sir," ſaid the mother, "are three girls who will make excellent wives. They never were at a ball or a play in their lives; and yet, though I ſay it, who ſhould not ſay it, they are as highly accompliſhed as any ladies

ladies at St. James's." I cordially approved the former part of her assertion, and bowed in silence to the latter.

I took this opportunity of enquiring what had been her mode of religious instruction for her daughters; but though I put the question with much caution and deference, she looked displeased, and said she did not think it necessary to do a great deal in that way; all these things must come from above; it was not human endeavours, but divine grace which made Christians. I observed that the truth appeared to be, that divine grace *blessing* human endeavours seemed most likely to accomplish that great end. She replied that experience was not on my side, for that the children of religious parents were not always religious. I allowed that it was too true. I knew she drew her instances from two or three of her own friends, who, while they discovered much earnestness about their own spiritual interests, had almost totally neglected the religious cultivation of their children; the

daughters in particular, had been ſuffered to follow their own devices, and to waſte their days in company of their own chuſing, and in the moſt frivolous manner. "What do ye more than others?" is an interrogation which this negligence has frequently ſuggeſted. Nay, profeſſing ſerious piety, if ye do not more than thoſe who profeſs it not, ye do leſs.

I took the liberty to remark that though there was no ſuch thing as hereditary holineſs, no entail of goodneſs; yet the Almighty had promiſed in the ſcriptures many bleſſings to the offspring of the righteous. He never meant, however, that religion was to be transferred arbitrarily like an heir-loom; but the promiſe was accompanied with conditions and injunctions. The directions were expreſs and frequent, to inculcate early and late the great truths of religion; nay, it was enforced with all the minuteneſs of detail, "precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little"—at all times and ſeaſons, "walking by the way, and ſitting in the houſe."

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I hazarded the aſſertion, that it would *generally* be found that where the children of pious parents turned out ill, there had been ſome miſtake, ſome neglect, or ſome fault on the part of the parents; that they had not uſed the right methods. I obſerved that I thought it did not at all derogate from the ſovereignty of the Almighty that he appointed certain means to accompliſh certain ends; and that the adopting theſe, in conformity to his appointment, and dependence on his bleſſing, ſeemed to be one of the caſes in which we ſhould prove our faith by our obedience.

I found I had gone too far—ſhe ſaid, with ſome warmth, that ſhe was not wanting in any duty to her daughters; ſhe ſet them a good example, and ſhe prayed daily for their converſion. I highly commended her for both, but riſked the obſervation, "that praying without inſtilling principles, might be as inefficacious as inſtruction without prayer. That it was like a huſbandman who ſhould expect that praying

for ſunſhine ſhould produce a crop of corn in a field where not one grain had been ſown. God, indeed, *could* effect this, but he does not do it; and the means being of his own appointment, his omnipotence is not leſs exerted, by his directing certain effects to follow certain cauſes, than it would be by any arbitrary act." As it was evident that ſhe did not chuſe to quarrel with me, ſhe contented herſelf with ſaying coldly, that ſhe perceived I was a *legaliſt*, and had but a low view of divine things.

At tea I found the young ladies took no more intereſt in the converſation, than they had done at dinner, but ſat whiſpering and laughing, and netting white ſilk gloves till they were ſummoned to the harpſichord. Deſpairing of getting on with them in company, I propoſed a walk in the garden. I now found them as willing to talk, as deſtitute of any thing to ſay. Their converſation was vapid and frivolous. They laid great ſtreſs on ſmall things. They ſeemed to have no ſhades in their underſtanding,

ſtanding, but uſed the ſtrongeſt terms for the commoneſt occaſions, and admiration was excited by things hardly worthy to command attention. They were extremely glad, and extremely ſorry, on ſubjects not calculated to excite affections of any kind. They were animated about trifles, and indifferent on things of importance. They were, I muſt confeſs, frank and good-natured, but it was evident, that as they were too open to have any thing to conceal, ſo they were too uninformed to have any thing to produce; and I was reſolved not to riſk my happineſs with a woman who could not contribute her full ſhare towards ſpending a wet winter cheerfully in the country.

The next day, all the hours from breakfaſt to dinner were devoted to the harp. I had the vanity to think that this ſacrifice of time was made in compliment to me, as I had profeſſed to like muſic; till I found that all their mornings were ſpent in the ſame manner, and the only fruit of their education, which ſeemed to be uſed to any

purpoſe was, that after their family devotions in the evening, they ſung and played a hymn. This was almoſt the only ſign they gave of intellectual or ſpiritual life. They attended morning prayers if they were dreſſed before the bell rang. One morning, when they did not appear till late, they were reproved by their father; Mrs. Ranby ſaid, "ſhe ſhould be more angry with them for their irregularity, were it not that Mr. Ranby obſtinately perſiſted in reading a printed form, which ſhe was perſuaded could not do any body much good." The poor man, who was really well diſpoſed, very properly defended himſelf by ſaying, that he hoped his own heart went along with every word he read; and as to his family, he thought it much more beneficial for them to join in an excellent compoſition of a judicious divine, than to attend to any ſuch crude rhapſody as he ſhould be able to produce, whoſe education had not qualified him to lead the devotions of others. I had never heard him venture to make uſe of his underſtanding

underſtanding before; and I continued to find it much better than I had at firſt given him credit for. The lady obſerved, with ſome aſperity, that where there were *gifts* and *graces*, it ſuperſeded the neceſſity of learning.

In vindication of my own good breeding, I ſhould obſerve that, in my little debates with Mrs. Ranby, to which I was always challenged by her, I never loſt ſight of that becoming example of the ſon of Cato, who, when about to deliver ſentiments which might be thought too aſſuming in ſo young a man introduced his admonitions with this modeſt preface,

Remember what our *father* oft has taught us.

I, without quoting the ſon of the ſage of Utica, conſtantly adduced the paternal authority for opinions, which might ſavour too much of arrogance without ſuch a ſanction.

I obſerved in the courſe of my viſit, that ſelf-denial made no part of Mrs. Ranby's religious plan. She fancied, I believe, that it ſavoured of works, and of works ſhe was evidently

evidently afraid. She talked as if activity were uſeleſs, and exertion unneceſſary, and as if like inanimate matter, we had nothing to do but to ſit ſtill and be ſhone upon.

I aſſured her that though I depended on the mercy of God, through the merits of his Son, for ſalvation, as entirely as ſhe could do, yet I thought that almighty grace ſo far from ſetting aſide diligent exertion, was the principle which promoted it. That ſalvation is in no part of ſcripture repreſented as attainable by the indolent chriſtian, if I might couple ſuch contradictory terms. That I had been often awfully ſtruck with the plain declarations, "that the kingdom of heaven ſuffereth violence"—"ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait gate"—"whatſoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might"—"give diligence to make your calling ſure"—"work out your own ſalvation." To this labour, this watchfulneſs, this ſedulity of endeavour, the crown of life is expreſsly promiſed, and ſalvation

ſalvation is not leſs the free gift of God, becauſe he has annexed certain conditions to our obtaining it.

The more I argued, the more I found my reputation decline, yet to argue ſhe compelled me. I really believe ſhe was ſincere, but ſhe was ill informed, governed by feelings and impulſes, rather than by the plain expreſs rule of ſcripture. It was not that ſhe did not read ſcripture, but ſhe interpreted it her own way; built opinions on inſulated texts; did not compare ſcripture with ſcripture, except as it concurred to ſtrengthen her bias. She conſidered with a diſproportionate fondneſs, thoſe paſſages which ſupported her preconceived opinions inſtead of being uniformly governed by the general tenor and ſpirit of the ſacred page. She had far leſs reverence for the preceptive, than for the doctrinal parts, becauſe ſhe did not ſufficiently conſider faith as an operative influential principle; nor did ſhe conceive that the ſublimeſt doctrines involve deep practical conſequences. She did not conſider the government of the tongue,

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nor the command of her paſſions, as forming any material part of the chriſtian character. Her zeal was fiery becauſe her temper was ſo; and her charity was cold, becauſe it was an expenſive propenſity to keep warm. Among the perfections of the Redeemer's character, ſhe did not conſider his being "meek and lowly," as an example, the influence of which was to extend to her. She conſidered it indeed as *admirable* but not as *imitable*; a diſtinction ſhe was very apt to make in all her practical diſſertations, and in her interpretation of ſcripture.

In the evening Mrs. Ranby was lamenting in general and rather cuſtomary terms, her own exceeding ſinfulneſs. Mr. Ranby ſaid, "You accuſe yourſelf rather too heavily my dear, you have ſins to be ſure." "And pray what ſins have I, Mr. Ranby?" ſaid ſhe, turning upon him with ſo much quickneſs that the poor man ſtarted. "Nay," ſaid he meekly, "I did not mean to offend you; ſo far from it, that hearing you condemn yourſelf ſo grievouſly, I intended

tended to comfort you, and to ſay that, except a few faults—" "And pray what faults?" interrupted ſhe, continuing to ſpeak however, leſt he ſhould catch an interval to tell them. "I defy you Mr. Ranby to produce one." "My dear," replied he, "as you charged yourſelf with all, I thought it would be letting you off cheaply by naming only two or three, ſuch as—." Here, fearing matters would go too far, I interpoſed, and ſoftening things as much as I could for the lady, ſaid, "I conceived that Mr. Ranby meant, that though ſhe partook of the general corruption—" Here Ranby interrupting me with more ſpirit than I thought he poſſeſſed, ſaid "General corruption, Sir, muſt be the ſource of particular corruption. I did not mean that my wife was worſe than other women." —"Worſe, Mr. Ranby, worſe?" cried ſhe. Ranby, for the firſt time in his life, not minding her went on. "As ſhe is always inſiſting that the whole ſpecies is corrupt, ſhe cannot help allowing that ſhe herſelf has

has not quite eſcapèd the infection. Now to be a ſinner in the groſs and a ſaint in the detail; that is, to have all ſins, and no faults, is a thing I do not quite comprehend."

After he had left the room, which he did as the ſhorteſt way of allaying the ſtorm, ſhe apologized for him, ſaid "he was a well-meaning man, and acted up to the little light he had;" but added, "that he was unacquainted with religious feelings, and knew little of the nature of converſion."

Mrs. Ranby I found ſeems to conſider Chriſtianity as a kind of free-maſonry, and therefore thinks it ſuperfluous to ſpeak on ſerious ſubjects to any but the initiated. If they do not *return the ſign*, ſhe gives them up as blind and dead. She thinks ſhe can only make herſelf intelligible to thoſe to whom certain peculiar phraſes are familiar, and though her friends may be correct, devout, and both doctrinally and practically pious; yet if they cannot catch a certain myſtic meaning, if there is not a ſympathy of

of intelligence between her and them, if they do not fully conceive of impreſſions, and cannot reſpond to myſterious communications, ſhe holds them unworthy of intercourſe with her. She does not ſo much inſiſt on high moral excellence as the criterion of their worth, as on their own account of their internal feelings.

She holds very cheap, that gradual growth in piety which is, in reality, no leſs the effect of divine grace, than thoſe inſtantaneous converſions, which ſhe believes to be ſo common. She cannot be perſuaded that, of every advance in piety, of every improvement in virtue, of every illumination of the underſtanding, of every amendment in the heart, of every rectification of the will, the ſpirit of God is no leſs the author, becauſe it is progreſſive, than if it were ſudden. It is true, Omnipotence can, when he pleaſes, ſtill produce theſe inſtantaneous effects, as he has ſometimes done; but as it is not his eſtabliſhed or common mode of operation, it ſeems vain and raſh, preſumptuouſly to wait for theſe miraculous

lous interferences. An implicit dependence, however, on ſuch interference, is certainly more gratifying to the genius of enthuſiaſm than the anxious vigilance, the fervent prayer, the daily ſtruggle, the ſometimes ſcarcely perceptible though conſtant progreſs of the ſober-minded Chriſtian. Such a Chriſtian is fully aware that his heart requires as much watching in the more advanced as in the earlier ſtages of his religious courſe. He is cheerful in a well-grounded hope, and looks not for extacies till that hope be ſwallowed up in fruition. Thankful if he feel in his heart a growing love to God, and an encreaſing ſubmiſſion to his will, though he is unconſcious of viſions, and unacquainted with any revelation but that which God has made in his word. He remembers, and he derives conſolation from the remembrance, that his Saviour, in his moſt gracious and ſoothing invitation to the "heavy laden," has mercifully promiſed "reſt," but he has no where promiſed rapture.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

But to return to Mrs. Ranby's daughters. Is this *conſiſtency*, ſaid I to myſelf, when I compared the inanity of the life with the ſerioufneſs of the diſcourſe; and contraſted the vacant way in which the day was ſpent, with the decent and devout manner in which it was begun and ended? I recollected, that under the early though imperfect ſacred inſtitution, the fire of the morning and evening ſacrifice was never ſuffered to be extinguiſhed during the day.

Though Mrs. Ranby would have thought it a little heatheniſh to have had her daughters inſtructed in polite literature, and to have filled a leiſure hour in reading to her a uſeful book, that was not profeſſedly religious, ſhe felt no compunction at their waſte of time, or the trifling purſuits in which the day was ſuffered to ſpend itſelf. The piano-forte, when they were weary of

the harp, copying ſome indifferent drawings, gilding a ſet of flower-pots, and netting white gloves and veils, ſeemed to fill up the whole buſineſs of theſe immortal beings, of theſe Chriſtians, for whom it had been ſolemnly engaged that they ſhould manfully fight under Chriſt's banner.

On a farther acquaintance, I was much more inclined to lay the blame on their education than their diſpoſitions. I found them not only good humoured, but charitably diſpoſed: but their charities were ſmall and caſual, often ill applied and always without a plan. They knew nothing of the ſtate, character, or wants of the neighbouring poor; and it had never been pointed out to them, that the inſtruction of the young and ignorant made any part of the duty of the rich towards them.

When I once ventured to drop a hint on this ſubject to Mrs. Ranby, ſhe drily ſaid, there were many other ways of doing good to the poor, beſides expoſing her daughters to the probability of catching diſeaſes, and

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the certainty of getting dirt by ſuch viſits. Her ſubſcription was never wanting when ſhe was *quite ſure* that the object was deſerving. As I ſuſpected that ſhe a little over-rated her own charity, I could not forbear obſerving that I did not think it demanded a combination of all the virtues to entitle a poor ſick wretch to a dinner. And though I durſt not quote ſo light an authority as Hamlet to her, I could not help ſaying to myſelf, *give every man his dye, and who ſhall 'ſcape whipping.* O! if God dealt ſo rigidly with us; if he waited to beſtow his ordinary bleſſings till we were good enough to deſerve them, who would be clothed? who would be fed? who would have a roof to ſhelter him?

It was not that ſhe gave nothing away, but ſhe had a great diſlike to relieve any but thoſe of her own religious perſuaſion. Though her Redeemer laid down His life for all people, nations, and languages, ſhe will only lay down her money for a very limited number of a very limited claſs. To

be religious is not claim ſufficient on her bounty, they muſt be religious in a particular way.

The Miſs Ranbys had not been habituated to make any ſyſtematic proviſion for regular charity, or for any of thoſe accidental calamities, for which the purſe of the affluent ſhould always be provided; and being very expenſive in their perſons, they had often not a ſixpence to beſtow, when the moſt deſerving caſe preſented itſelf. This muſt frequently happen where there is no ſpecific fund for charity, which ſhould be included in the general arrangement of expences; and the exerciſe of benevolence not be left to depend on the accidental ſtate of the purſe. If no new trinket happened to be wanted, theſe young ladies were liberal to any application, though always without judging of its merits by their own eyes and ears. But if there was a competition between a ſick family and a new broach, the broach was ſure to carry the day. This would have not been

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the caſe, had they been habituated to viſit themſelves the abodes of penury and woe. Their flexible young hearts would have been wrought upon by the actual ſight of miſeries, the impreſſion of which was feeble when it reached their ears at a diſtance, ſurrounded as they were with all the ſoftneſſes and accommodations of luxurious life. "They would do what they could. They hoped it was not ſo bad as was repreſented." They fell into the uſual way of pacifying their conſciences by their regrets; and brought themſelves to believe that their ſympathy with the ſuffering was an atonement for their not relieving it.

I obſerved with concern, during my viſit how little the Chriſtian temper ſeemed to be conſidered as a part of the Chriſtian religion. This appeared in the daily concerns of this high profeſſor. An opinion contradicted, a perſon of different religious views commended, the ſmalleſt oppoſition to her will, the intruſion of an unſeaſonable viſitor, even an imperfection in the

dreſſing of ſome diſh at table: ſuch trifles not only diſcompoſed her, but the diſcompoſure was manifeſted with a vehemence, which ſhe was not aware was a fault; nor did ſhe ſeem at all ſenſible that her religion was ever to be reſorted to but on great occaſions, forgetting that great occaſions but rarely occur in common life, and that theſe ſmall paſſes, at which the enemy is perpetually entering, the true Chriſtian will vigilantly guard.

I obſerved in Mrs. Ranby one ſtriking inconſiſtency. While ſhe conſidered it as forming a complete line of ſeparation from the world, that ſhe and her daughters abſtained from public places, ſhe had no objection to their indemnifying themſelves for this forbearance, by devoting ſo monſtrous a diſproportion of their time to that very amuſement which conſtitutes ſo principal a part of diverſion abroad. The time which is redeemed from what is wrong, is of little value, if not dedicated to what is right; and it is not enough that the doc-

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trines of the goſpel furniſh a ſubject for diſcuſſion, if they do not furniſh a principle of action.

One of the moſt obvious defects which ſtruck me in this and two or three other families, whom I afterwards viſited, was the want of companionableneſs in the daughters. They did not ſeem to form a part of the family compact; but made a kind of diſtinct branch of themſelves. Surely, when only the parents and a few ſelect friends are met together in a family way, the daughters ſhould contribute their portion to enliven the domeſtic circle. They were always ready to ſing and to play, but did not take the pains to produce themſelves in converſation; but ſeemed to carry on a diſtinct intercourſe, by herding, and whiſpering, and laughing together.

In ſome women who ſeemed to be poſſeſſed of good ingredients, they were ſo ill mixed up together as not to produce an elegant, intereſting companion. It appeared to me that three of the grand in-

ducements in the choice of a wife, are, that a man may have a directreſs for his family, a preceptreſs for his children, and a companion for himſelf. Can it be honeſtly affirmed that the preſent habits of domeſtic life are generally favourable to the union of theſe three eſſentials? Yet which of them can a man of ſenſe and principle conſent to relinquiſh in his conjugal proſpects?

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

I RETURNED to town at the end of a few days. To a ſpeculative ſtranger, a *London day* preſents every variety of circumſtance in every conceivable ſhape, of which human life is ſuſceptible. When you trace the ſolicitude of the morning countenance, the anxious exploring of the morning paper, the eager interrogation of the morning gueſt; when you hear the diſmal enumeration of loſſes by land, and perils by ſea—taxes trebling, dangers multiplying, commerce annihilating, war protracted, invaſion threatening, deſtruction impending—your mind catches and communicates the terror, and you feel yourſelf "falling with a falling ſtate."

But when, in the courſe of the very ſame day, you meet theſe gloomy prognoſticators at the ſumptuous, not "dinner but Hecatomb, at the gorgeous fete, the ſplendid

ſplendid ſpectacle; when you hear the frivolous diſcourſe, witneſs the luxurious diſſipation, contemplate the boundleſs indulgence, and obſerve the ruinous gaming, you would be ready to exclaim, "Am I not ſupping in the Antipodes of that land in which I breakfaſted? Surely this is a country of different men, different characters, and different circumſtances. This at leaſt is a place in which there is neither fear, nor danger, nor want, nor miſery, nor war."

If you obſerved the overflowing ſubſcriptions raiſed, the innumerable ſocieties formed, the committees appointed, the agents employed, the royal patrons engaged, the noble preſidents provided, the palace-like ſtructures erected; and all this to alleviate, to cure, and even to prevent, every calamity which the indigent can ſuffer, or the affluent conceive; to remove not only want but ignorance; to ſuppreſs not only miſery but vice—would you not exclaim with Hamlet, "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reaſon! How infinite in faculties!

culties! In action how like an angel! in compaſſion how like a God!"

If you looked into the whole comet-like eccentric orbit of the human character; if you compared all the ſtruggling contrariety of principle and of paſſion; the claſhing of opinion and of action, of reſolution and of performance; the victories of evil over the propenſities to good; if you contraſted the ſplendid virtue with the diſorderly vice; the exalted generoſity with the ſelfiſh narrowneſs; the provident bounty with the thoughtleſs prodigality; the extremes of all that is dignified, with the exceſſes of all that is abject, would you not exclaim, in the very ſpirit of Paſcal, O! the grandeur and the littleneſs, the excellence and the corruption, the majeſty and the meanneſs of man!

If you attended the debates in our great deliberative aſſemblies; if you heard the argument and the eloquence, "the wiſdom and the wit," the public ſpirit and the diſintereſtedneſs; Curtius's devotedneſs to his country, and Regulus's diſdain of ſelf, expreſſed

preſſed with all the logic which reaſon can ſuggeſt, and embelliſhed with all the rhetoric which fancy can ſupply, would you not rapturouſly cry out, this is

Above all Greek, above all Roman fame.

But if you diſcerned the bitter perſonality, the incurable prejudice, the cutting retort, the ſuſpicious implication, the recriminating ſneer, the cheriſhed animoſity; if you beheld the intereſts of an empire ſtanding ſtill, the buſineſs of the civilized globe ſuſpended, while two intellectual gladiators are thruſting each to give the other a fall, and to ſhew his own ſtrength; would you not lament the littleneſs of the great, the infirmities of the good, and the weakneſſes of the wiſe? Would you not, ſoaring a flight far above Hamlet or Paſcal, apoſtrophize with the Royal Pſalmiſt, "Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the ſon of man that thou regardeſt him?"

But to deſcend to my individual concerns. Among my acquaintance, I viſited two ſeparate families, where the daughters were

were remarkably attractive; and more than usually endowed with beauty, sense and elegance; but I was deterred from following up the acquaintance, by observing, in each family, practices which, though very different, almost equally revolted me.

In one, where the young ladies had large fortunes they insinuated themselves into the admiration, and invited the familiarity, of young men, by attentions the most flattering, and civilities the most alluring. When they had made sure of their aim, and the admirers were encouraged to make proposals, the ladies burst out into a loud laugh, wondered what the man could mean; they never dreamt of any thing more than common politeness; then petrified them with distant looks, and turned about to practise the same arts on others.

The other family in which I thought I had secured an agreeable intimacy, I instantly deserted on observing the gracious and engaging reception given by the ladies to more than one libertine of the most notorious

torious profligacy. The men were handſome, and elegant, and faſhionable, and had figured in newſpapers and courts of juſtice. This degrading popularity rather attracted than repelled attention; and while the guilty aſſociates in their crimes were ſhunned with abhorrence by theſe very ladies, the ſpecious undoers were not only received with complaiſance, but there was a ſort of competition who ſhould be moſt ſtrenuous in their endeavours to attract them.—Surely women of faſhion can hardly make a more corrupt uſe of influence, a talent for which they will be peculiarly accountable. Surely, mere perſonal purity can hardly deſerve the name of virtue in thoſe who can ſanction notoriouſly vicious characters, which their reprobation, if it could not reform, would at leaſt degrade.

On a further acquaintance, I found Sir John and Lady Belfield to be perſons of much worth. They were candid, generous, and ſincere. They ſaw the errors of the world in which they lived, but had not reſolution

ſolution to emancipate themſelves from its ſhackles. They partook, indeed, very ſparingly of its diverſions, not ſo much becauſe they ſuſpected their evil tendency, as becauſe they were weary of them, and becauſe they had better reſources in themſelves.

'Indeed, it is wonderful that more people from mere good ſenſe and juſt taſte, without the operation of any religious conſideration, do not, when the firſt ardour is cooled, perceive the futility of what is called pleaſure, and decline it as the man declines the amuſements of the child. But faſhionable ſociety produces few perſons who, like the ex-courtier of King David, aſſign their fourſcore years as a reaſon for no longer "delighting in the voice of ſinging men and ſinging women."

Sir John and Lady Belfield, however, kept up a large general acquaintance; and it is not eaſy to continue to aſſociate with the world, without retaining ſomething of its ſpirit. Their ſtandard of morals was high, compared with that of thoſe with whom

whom they lived; but when the ſtandard of the Goſpel was ſuggeſted, they drew in a little and thought *things might be carried too far*. There was nothing in their practice which made it their intereſt to hope that Chriſtianity might not be true. They both aſſented to its doctrines, and lived in a kind of general hope of its final promiſes. But their views were neither correct, nor elevated. They were contented to generalize the doctrines of ſcripture, and though they venerated its awful truths in the aggregate, they rather took them upon truſt than laboured to underſtand them, or to imbue their minds with the ſpirit of them. Many a high profeſſor, however, might have bluſhed to ſee how carefully they exerciſed not a few Chriſtian diſpoſitions; how kind and patient they were! how favourable in their conſtruction of the actions of others! how charitable to the neceſſitous! how exact in veracity! and how tender of the reputation of their neighbour!

Sir John had been early hurt by living ſo much

much with men of the world, with wits, politicians, and philoſophers. This, though he had eſcaped the contagion of falſe principles, had kept back the growth of ſuch as were true. Men verſed in the world, and abſtracted from all religious ſociety, begin, in time, a little to ſuſpect whether their own religious opinions may not poſſibly be wrong, or at leaſt rigid, when they ſee them ſo oppoſite to thoſe of perſons to whoſe judgment they are accuſtomed to look up in other points. He found too, that, in the ſociety in which he lived, the reputation of religion detracted much from that of talents; and a man does not care to have his underſtanding queſtioned by thoſe in whoſe opinion he wiſhes to ſtand well. This apprehenſion did not, indeed, drive him to renounce his principles, but it led him to conceal them; and that piety which is forcibly kept out of ſight, which has nothing to fortify, and every thing to repel it, is too apt to decline.

His marriage with an amiable woman,

whoſe virtues and graces attached him to his own home, drew him off from the moſt dangerous of his prior connections. This union had at once improved his character, and augmented his happineſs. If Lady Belfield erred, it was through exceſs of kindneſs and candour. Her kindneſs led to the too great indulgence of her children; and her candour to the too favourable conſtruction of the errors of her acquaintance. She was the reverſe of my Hampſtead friend. Whereas Mrs. Ranby thought hardly any body would be ſaved, Lady Belfield comforted herſelf that hardly any body was in danger. This opinion was not taken up as a palliative to quiet her conſcience, on account of the ſins of her own conduct, for her conduct was remarkably correct; but it ſprung from a natural ſweetneſs of temper, joined to a mind not ſufficiently informed and guided by ſcriptural truth. She was candid and teachable, but as ſhe could not help ſeeing that ſhe had more religion than moſt of her acquaintance, ſhe felt

felt a ſecret complacency in obſerving how far her principles roſe above theirs, inſtead of an humbling conviction of how far her own fell below the requiſitions of the goſpel.

The fundamental error was, that ſhe had no diſtinct view of the corruption of human nature. She often lamented the weakneſſes and vices of individuals, but thought all vice an incidental not a radical miſchief, the effect of thoughtleſſneſs and caſual temptation. She talked with diſcrimination of the faults of ſome of her children; but while ſhe rejoiced in the happier diſpoſitions of the others, ſhe never ſuſpected that they had all brought into the world with them any natural tendency to evil; and thought it cruel to ſuppoſe that ſuch innocent little things had any ſuch wrong propenſities as education would not effectually cure. In every thing the complete contraſt of Mrs. Ranby — as the latter thought education could do nothing, Lady Belfield thought it would do every thing; that there was no good tendency which it would not bring to

perfection, and no corruption which it could not completely eradicate. On the operation of a higher influence she placed too little dependance, while Mrs. Ranby rested in an unreasonable trust on an interference not warranted by scripture.

In regard to her children, Lady Belfield was led by the strength of her affection to extreme indulgence. She encouraged no vice in them, but she did not sufficiently check those indications which are the seeds of vice. She reproved the actual fault, but never thought of implanting a principle which might extirpate the evil from whence the fault sprung; so that the individual error and the individual correction were continually recurring.

As Mrs. Ranby, I had observed, seldom quoted any sacred writer but St. Paul, I remarked that Lady Belfield admired almost exclusively Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, and the historical books of the Bible. Of the Epistles, that of St. James was her favourite; the others she thought chiefly,

if

if not entirely, applicable to the circumſtances of the Jews and Pagans, to the converts from among whom they were addreſſed. If ſhe entertained rather an awful reverence for the doctrinal parts, than an earneſt wiſh to ſtudy them, it aroſe from the common miſtake of believing that they were purely ſpeculative, without being aware of their deep practical importance. But if theſe two ladies were diametrically oppoſite to each other in certain points, both were frequently right in what they aſſumed, and both wrong only in what they rejected. Each contended for one half of that which will not ſave when disjoined from the other, but which, when united to it, makes up the complete Chriſtian character.

Lady Belfield, who was, if I may ſo ſpeak, conſtitutionally charitable, almoſt thought that heaven might be purchaſed by charity. She inverted the valuable ſuperſtructure of good works, and laid them as her foundation; and while Mrs. Ranby would not

perhaps, much have blamed Moſes for breaking the tables of the law, had he only demoliſhed the ſecond, Lady Belfield would have ſaved the ſecond, as the more important of the two.

Lady Belfield has leſs vanity than any woman I ever knew who was not governed by a very ſtrict religious principle. Her modeſty never courted the admiration of the world, but her timidity too much dreaded its cenſure. She would not do a wrong thing to obtain any applauſe, but ſhe omitted ſome right ones from the dread of blame.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

THE houſe of Sir John Belfield was become a pleaſant kind of home to me. He and his lady ſeldom went out in an evening. Happy in each other and in their children, though they lived much with the rational, they aſſociated as little as they thought poſſible with the racketing world. Yet being known to be generally at home they were expoſed to the inroads of certain invaders, called fine ladies, who always afraid of being too early for their parties, are conſtantly on the watch, how to diſburthen themſelves for the intermediate hour, of the heavy commodity *time;* a raw material, which, as they ſeldom work up at home, they are always willing to truck againſt the time of their more domeſtic acquaintance. Now as theſe laſt *have* always ſomething to do, it is an unfair traffic,

"all the reciprocity is on one ſide," to borrow the expreſſion of an illuſtrious ſtateſman; and the barter is as diſadvantageous to the ſober home-trader, as that of the honeſt negroes, who exchange their gold duſt and ivory for the beads and bits of glaſs of the wily Engliſh.

Theſe nightly irruptions, though ſometimes inconvenient to my friends, were of uſe to me, as they enabled me to ſee and judge more of the gay world, than I could have done without going in ſearch of it; a riſk, which I thought bore no proportion to the gain. It was like learning the language of the enemy's country at home.

One evening, when we were ſitting happily alone in the Library, Lady Belfield working at her embroidery, cheerfully joining in our little diſcuſſions, and comparing our peaceful pleaſures with thoſe purſued by the occupiers of the countleſs carriages which were tearing up the "wheel-worn ſtreets," or joſtling each other at the door of the next houſe, where a grand aſſembly

was collecting its myriads—Sir John aſked what ſhould be the evening book. Then riſing, he took down from the ſhelf Akenſide's Pleaſures of Imagination.

"Is it," ſaid he, as ſoon as he ſat down, "the rage for novelty, or a real degeneracy of taſte, that we now ſo ſeldom hear of a poet, who, when I was a boy, was the admiration of every man who had a reliſh for true genius? I cannot defend his principles, ſince, in a work, of which *Man* is profeſſedly the object, he has overlooked his *immortality*; a ſubject, which one wonders did not force itſelf upon him, as ſo congenial to the ſublimity of his genius, whatever his religious views might have been. But to ſpeak of him only as a poet; a work which abounds in a richer profuſion of images, and a more variegated luxuriance of expreſſion than the Pleaſures of Imagination, cannot eaſily be found. The flimſy metre of our day ſeems to add freſh value to his ſinewy verſe. We have no happier maſter

maſter of poetic numbers; none who better knew

To build the lofty rhyme.

The condenſed vigour, ſo indiſpenſable to blank verſe, the ſkilful variation of the pauſe, the maſterly ſtructure of the period, and all the occult myſteries of the art, can perhaps be beſt learnt from Akenſide. If he could have conveyed to Thomſon his melody and rhythm, and Thomſon would have paid him back in perſpicuity and tranſparency of meaning, how might they have enriched each other!"

"I confeſs," ſaid I, "in reading Akenſide, I have now and then found the ſame paſſage at once enchanting and unintelligible. As it happens to many frequenters of the Opera, the muſic always tranſports, but the words are not always underſtood." I then deſired my friend to gratify us with the firſt book of the Pleaſures of Imagination.

Sir John is a paſſionate lover of poetry, in which he has a fine taſte. He read it with

with much ſpirit and feeling, eſpecially theſe truly claſſical lines,

Mind, mind alone, bear witneſs earth and heaven,
The living fountains in itſelf contains
Of beauteous and ſublime: here hand in hand
Sit paramount the graces; here enthroned
Celeſtial Venus, with divineſt airs
Invites the ſoul to never-fading joy.

"The reputation of this exquiſite paſſage," ſaid he, laying down the book, "is eſtabliſhed by the conſenting ſuffrage of all men of taſte, though by the critical countenance you are beginning to put on, you look as if you had a mind to attack it."

"So far from it," ſaid I, "that I know nothing more ſplendid in the whole maſs of our poetry. And I feel almoſt guilty of high treaſon againſt the majeſty of the ſublimer Muſes, in the remark I am going to hazard, on the celebrated lines which follow. The Poet's object through this and the two following pages, is to eſtabliſh the infinite ſuperiority of mind over unconſcious matter, even in its faireſt forms. The idea is as juſt as the execution is beautiful; ſo

ſo alſo is his ſupreme elevation of intellect, over

Greatneſs of bulk, or ſymmetry of parts.

Nothing again can be finer than his ſubſequent preference of

The powers of genius and deſign,

over even the ſtupendous range

Of planets, ſuns, and adamantine ſpheres.

He proceeds to ranſack the ſtories of the mental and the moral world, as he had done the world of matter, and with a pen dipped in Hippocrene, oppoſes to the latter,

The charms of virtuous friendſhip, &c.

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The candid bluſh

Of him who ſtrives with fortune to be juſt.

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All the mild majeſty of private life.

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The graceful tear that ſtreams from other's woes.

"Why, Charles," ſaid Sir John, "I am glad to find you the enthuſiaſtic eulogiſt of the paſſage of which I ſuſpected you were about to be the ſaucy cenſurer."

"Cenſure,"

"Cenſure," replied I, "is perhaps too ſtrong a term for any part, eſpecially the moſt admired part of this fine poem. I need not repeat the lines on which I was going to riſk a ſlight obſervation; they live in the mind and memory of every lover of the Muſes.

"I will read the next paſſage, however," ſaid Sir John, "that I may be better able to controvert your criticiſm:

Look then abroad through nature to the range
Of planets, ſuns, and adamantine ſpheres,
Wheeling unſhaken through the void immenſe,
And ſpeak, oh man! does this capacious ſcene
With half that kindling majeſty dilate
Thy ſtrong conception, as when Brutus roſe
Refulgent from the ſtroke of Cæſar's fate
Amid the crowd of patriots, and his arm
Aloft extending, like eternal Jove
When guilt brings down the thunder, call'd aloud
On Tully's name, and ſhook his crimſon ſteel,
And bade the father of his country hail;
For lo! the tyrant proſtrate in the duſt,
And Rome again is free!

"What a grand and powerful paſſage," ſaid Sir John!

"I acknow-

"I acknowlege it," ſaid I, "but is it as juſt as it is grand? *Le vrai eſt le ſeul beau.* Is it a fair and direct oppoſition between mind and matter? The poet could not have expreſſed the image more nobly, but might he not, out of the abundant treaſures of his opulent mind have choſen it with more felicity? Is an act of murder even of an uſurper, as happily contraſted with the organization of matter, as the other beautiful inſtances I named, and which he goes on to ſelect? The ſuperiority of mental beauty is the point he is eſtabliſhing, and his elaborate preparation leads you to expect all his other inſtances to be drawn from pure mental excellence. His other exemplifications are general, this is particular. They are a claſs, this is only a variety. I queſtion if Milton, who was at leaſt as ardent a champion for liberty and as much of a party man as Akenſide, would have uſed this illuſtration. Milton, though he often inſinuates a political ſtroke in his great poem, always, I think, generalizes.

ralizes. Whatever had been his principles, or at whatever period he had written, I queſtion, when he wanted to deſcribe the overthrow of authority by the rebel angels, if he would have illuſtrated it by Cromwell's ſeizing the mace, or the decapitation of Charles; much leſs, if he would have ſelected thoſe two inſtances, as the triumph of mind over matter."

"But," ſaid Sir John, "you forget that Akenſide profeſſedly adopts the language of Cicero in his ſecond Philippic." He then read the note beginning with Cæſare interfecto, &c.

"True," ſaid I, "I am not arguing the matter as a point of fact, but as a point of juſt application. I paſs over the compariſon of Brutus with Jove, which by the way would have become Tully better than Akenſide, but which Tully would have perhaps thought too bold. Cicero adorns his oration with this magnificent deſcription. He relates it as an event, the other uſes it as an illuſtration of that to which I humbly

humbly conceive it does not exactly apply. The orator paints the violent death of a hero; the poet adopts the deſcription of this violent death, or rather the ſtroke which cauſed it, to illuſtrate the perfection of intellectual grandeur. After all, it is as much a party queſtion as a poetical one. A queſtion on which the critic will be apt to be guided in his deciſion by his politics rather than by his taſte. The ſplendour of the paſſage, however, will inevitably dazzle the feeling reader, till it produce the common effect of exceſſive brightneſs, that of ſomewhat blinding the beholder."

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

WHILE we were thus pleaſantly engaged the ſervant announced Mrs. Fentham; and a faſhionable looking woman, about the middle of life, rather youthfully dreſt, and not far from handſome, made her appearance. Inſtead of breaking forth into the uſual modiſh jargon, ſhe politely entered into the ſubject in which ſhe found us engaged; envied Lady Belfield the happineſs of elegant quiet, which ſhe herſelf might have been equally enjoying at her own houſe, and profeſſed herſelf a warm admirer of poetry. She would probably have profeſſed an equal fondneſs for metaphyſics, geometry, military tactics, or the Arabic language, if ſhe had happened to have found us employed in the ſtudy of either.

From poetry the tranſition to painting was eaſy and natural. Mrs. Fentham poſ-

feſſed all the phraſeology of connoiſſeur-ſhip, and aſked me if I was fond of pictures. I profeſſed the delight I took in them in ſtrong, that is, in true terms. She politely ſaid, that Mr. Fentham had a very tolerable collection of the beſt maſters, and particularly a Titian, which ſhe would be happy to have the honour of ſhewing me next morning. I bowed my thankful aſſent; ſhe appointed the hour, and ſoon after, looking at her watch, ſaid ſhe was afraid ſhe muſt leave the delights of ſuch a ſelect and intereſting ſociety for a far leſs agreeable party.

When ſhe was gone, I expreſſed my obligations to her politeneſs, and anticipated the pleaſure I ſhould have in ſeeing her pictures. "She is much more anxious that you ſhould ſee her *Originals*," ſaid Lady Belfield, ſmiling; "the kindneſs is not *quite* diſintereſted; take care of your heart." Sir John rather gravely ſaid, "It is with reluctance that I ever ſay any thing to the prejudice of any body that I receive in my houſe;

houſe; but as the ſon of my valued friend, I think it fair to tell you that this vigilant matron keeps a keen look-out after all young men of fortune. This is not the firſt time that that Titian has been made the bait to catch a promiſing acquaintance. Indeed it is now grown ſo ſtale, that had you not been a new man, ſhe would hardly have riſked it. If you had happened not to like painting, ſome book would have been offered you. The return of a book naturally brings on a viſit. But all theſe devices have not yet anſwered. The damſels ſtill remain, like Shakeſpeare's plaintive maid, "in ſingle bleſſedneſs." They do not however, like her, ſpend gloomy nights

Chaunting cold hymns to the pale, lifeleſs moon,

but in ſinging ſprightlier roundelays to livelier auditors."

I punctually attended the invitation, effectually ſhielded from danger by the friendly intimation, and a ſtill more infallible Ægis, the charge of my father never to

embark in any engagement till I had made my visit to Mr. Stanley. My veneration for his memory operated as a complete defence.

I saw and admired the pictures. The pictures brought on an invitation to dinner. I found Mrs. Fentham to be in her conversation, a sensible, correct knowing woman. Her daughters were elegant in their figures, well instructed in the usual accomplishments, well bred, and apparently well tempered. Mr. Fentham was a man of business, and of the world. He had a great income from a place under government, out of which the expences of his family permitted him to save nothing. Private fortune he had little or none. His employment engaged him almost entirely, so that he interfered but little with domestic affairs. A general air of elegance, almost amounting to magnificence, pervaded the whole establishment.

I at first saw but little to excite any suspicion of the artificial character of the lady of the house. The first gleam of light which

which let in the truth was the expreſſions moſt frequent in Mrs. Fentham's mouth—"What will the world ſay?" "What will people think?" "How will ſuch a thing appear?" "Will it have a good look?" "The world is of opinion"—"Won't ſuch a thing be cenſured." On a little acquaintance I diſcovered that human applauſe was the motive of all ſhe ſaid, and reputation her great object in all ſhe did. Opinion was the idol to which ſhe ſacrificed. Decorum was the inſpirer of her duties, and praiſe the reward of them. The ſtandard of the world was the ſtandard by which ſhe weighed actions. She had no higher principle of conduct. She adopted the forms of religion, becauſe ſhe ſaw that, carried to a certain degree, they rather produced credit than cenſure. While her huſband adjuſted his accounts on the Sunday morning, ſhe regularly carried her daughters to church, except a head-ache had been caught at the Saturday's opera; and as regularly exhibited herſelf and them

afterwards in Hyde-park. As ſhe ſaid it was Mr. Fentham's leiſure day, ſhe complimented him with always having a great dinner on Sundays, but alledged her piety as a reaſon for not having cards in the evening at home, though ſhe had no ſcruple to make one at a private party at a friend's houſe; ſoberly conditioning, however, that there ſhould not be more than *three tables*; the right or wrong, the decorum or impropriety, the gaiety or gravity always being made ſpecifically to depend on the number of tables.

She was, in general, extremely ſevere againſt women who had loſt their reputation; though ſhe had no heſitation in viſiting a few of the moſt diſhonourable, if they were of high rank, or belonged to a certain ſet. In that caſe, ſhe excuſed herſelf by ſaying, "that as faſhionable people continued to countenance them, it was not for her to be ſcrupulous—One muſt ſail with the ſtream—I can't ſet my face againſt the world." But if an unhappy girl had been drawn aſide, or one who had not rank to bear

bear her out had erred, that altered the caſe, and ſhe then expreſſed the moſt virtuous indignation. When modeſty happened to be in repute, not the necks of Queen Elizabeth and her courtly virgins were more entrenched in ruffs and ſhrouded in tuckers, than thoſe of Mrs. Fentham and her daughters; but when *diſplay* became the order of the day, the Grecian Venus was ſcarcely more unconſcious of a veil.

With a very good underſtanding ſhe never allowed herſelf one original thought or one ſpontaneous action. Her ideas, her language, and her conduct were entirely regulated by the ideas, language, and conduct of thoſe who ſtood well with the world. Vanity in her was a ſteady, inward, but powerfully pervading principle. It did not evaporate in levity or indiſcretion, but was the hidden, though forcible ſpring of her whole courſe of action. She had all the gratification which vanity affords in ſecret, and all the credit which its prudent operation procures in public.

She was apparently guilty of no exceſs of any kind. She had a ſober ſcale of creditable vices, and never allowed herſelf to exceed a few ſtated degrees in any of them. She reprobated gaming, but could not exiſt without cards. Maſquerades ſhe cenſured as highly extravagant and dangerous, but when given by ladies of high quality, at their own houſes, ſhe thought them an elegant and proper amuſement. Though ſhe ſometimes went to the play, ſhe did not care for what paſt on the ſtage, for ſhe confeſſed the chief pleaſure the theatre afforded, was to reckon up, when ſhe came home, how many ducheſſes and counteſſes had bowed to her acroſs the houſe.

A complete deſpot at home, her arbitrarineſs is ſo veiled by correctneſs of manner, and ſtudied good breeding, that ſhe obtains the credit of great mildneſs and moderation. She is ſaid not to love her daughters, who come too near her in age, and go too much beyond her in beauty to be forgiven; yet like a conſummate politician,

tician, ſhe is ever labouring for their advancement. She has generally ſeveral ſchemes in hand, and always one ſcheme under another, the under-plot ready to be brought forward if the principal one fails. Though ſhe encourages pretenders, yet ſhe is afraid to accept of a tolerable propoſal, leſt a better ſhould preſent itſelf: but if the loftier hope fails, ſhe then contrives to lure back the inferior offer. She can balance to a nicety, in the calculation of chances, the advantages or diſadvantages of a higher poſſibility againſt a lower probability.

Though ſhe neither wants reading nor taſte her mind is never ſufficiently diſengaged to make her an agreeable companion. Her head is always at work, conjecturing the event of every freſh ball and every new acquaintance. She cannot even

Take her tea without a ſtratagem.

She ſet out in life with a very ſlender acquaintance and clung for a while to one or two damaged peereſſes, who were not received

ceived by women of their own rank. But I am told it was curious to see with what adroitness she could extricate herself from a disreputable acquaintance, when a more honourable one stept in to fill the niche. She made her way rapidly, by insinuating to one person of note how intimate she was with another, and to both what handsome things each said of the other. By constant attentions, petty offices, and measured flattery, she has got footing into almost every house of distinction. Her decorum is invariable. She boasts that she was never guilty of the indecency of violent passion. Poor woman! she fancies there is no violent passion but that of anger. Little does she think that ambition, vanity, the hunger of applause, a rage for being universally known, are all violent passions, however modified by discretion, or varnished by art. She suffers too all that "vexation of spirit" which treads on the heels of "vanity." Disappointment and jealousy poison the days devoted to pleasure. The party does not

not anſwer. The wrong people never ſtay away, and the rights ones never come. The gueſt for whom the fete is made is ſure to fail. Her party is thin, while that of her competitor overflows; or there is a plenty of dowagers and a paucity of young men. When the coſtly and elaborate ſupper is on the table excuſes arrive; even if the ſupper is crowded, the daughters remain upon hand.—How ſtrikingly does ſhe exemplify the ſtrong expreſſion of—"labouring in the fire for very vanity"—of "giving her money for that which is not bread, and her labour for that which ſatisfieth not!"

After ſpending the day at Mrs. Fentham's, I went to ſup with my friends in Cavendiſh-Square. Lady Belfield was impatient for my hiſtory of the dinner. But Sir John ſaid laughing, "You ſhall not ſay a word, Charles—I can tell how it was as exactly as if I had been there.—Charlotte who has the beſt voice, was brought out to ſing, but was placed a little behind, as her perſon

is

is not quite perfect; Maria who is the moſt picturesque figure, was put *to attitudinize* at the harp, arrayed in the coſtume, and aſſuming the faſcinating graces of Marmion's Lady Heron;

> Fair was her rounded arm, as o'er
> The ſtrings her fingers flew.

Then Charles was the moment of peril! then, according to your favourite Milton's moſt incongruous image,

> You took in ſounds that might create a ſoul
> Under the ribs of death.

"For fear, however, that your heart of adamant ſhould hold out againſt all theſe perilous aſſaults, its vulnerability was tried in other quarters. The Titian would naturally lead to Lavinia's drawings. A beautiful ſketch of the lakes would be produced, with a gentle intimation, what a ſweet place Weſtmoreland muſt be to live in! When you had exhauſted all proper raptures on the art and on the artiſt, it would be recollected, that as Weſtmoreland was ſo near Scotland, you would naturally be fond of a reel

a reel—The reel of courſe ſucceeded." Then, putting himſelf into an attitude, and ſpeaking theatrically, he continued

"Then univerſal Pan,
Knit with the graces and the hours in dance—

Oh! no, I forget, univerſal Pan could not join—but he could admire.—Then all the perfections of all the nymphs burſt on you in full blaze.—Such a concentration of attractions you never could reſiſt! You are *but* a man, and now, doubtleſs, a loſt man." —Here he ſtopped to finiſh his laugh, and I was driven reluctantly to acknowledge that his picture, though a caricature, was notwithſtanding, a reſemblance.

"And ſo," ſaid Sir John, "you were brought under no power of incantation by this dangerous viſit. You will not be driven, like the tempted Ithacan, to tye yourſelf to a maſt, or to flee for ſafety from the enchantment of theſe ſyrens."

While we were at ſupper, with more gravity, he ſaid, "Among the various objects of ambition, there are few in life which

which bring leſs acceſſion to its comfort, than an unceaſing ſtruggle to riſe to an elevation in ſociety very much above the level of our own condition, without being aided by any ſtronger aſcending power than mere vanity. Great talents, of whatever kind, have a natural tendency to riſe, and to lift their poſſeſſor. The flame in mounting, does but obey its impulſe. But when there is no energy more powerful than the paſſion to be great, deſtitute of the gifts which confer greatneſs, the painful efforts of ambition are like water, forced above its level by mechanical powers. It requires conſtant exertions of art, to keep up what art firſt ſet a-going. Poor Mrs. Fentham's head is perpetually at work to maintain the elevation ſhe has reached. And how little after all is ſhe conſidered by thoſe on whoſe careſſes her happineſs depends! She has loſt the eſteem of her original circle, where ſhe might have been reſpected, without gaining that of her high aſſociates, who, though they receive her, ſtill refuſe her claims

claims of equality. She is not conſidered as of their *eſtabliſhment*, it is but *toleration* at beſt."

At Mrs. Fentham's I encountered Lady Bab Lawleſs, a renowned modiſh dowager famous for laying ſiege to the heart of every diſtinguiſhed man, with the united artillery of her own wit, and her daughter's beauty. How many ways there are of being wrong! She was of a character diametrically oppoſite to that of Mrs. Fentham. She had the ſame end in view, but the means ſhe uſed to accompliſh it were of a bolder ſtrain. Lady Bab affected no delicacy, ſhe laughed at reſerve, ſhe had ſhaken hands with decorum.

She held the noiſy tenor of her way

with no aſſumed refinement; and, ſo far from ſhielding her deſigns behind the maſk of decency, ſhe diſdained the obſolete expedient. Her plans ſucceeded the more infallibly, becauſe her frankneſs defeated all ſuſpicion. A man could never divine

that ſuch gay and open aſſaults could have their foundation in deſign, and he gave her full credit for artleſs ſimplicity, at the moment ſhe was catching him in her toils. If ſhe now and then had gone too far, and by a momentary overſight or exceſſive levity had betrayed too much, with infinite addreſs ſhe would make a crane neck turn, and fall to diſcuſſing, not without ability, ſome moral or theological topic. Thus ſhe affected to eſtabliſh the character of a woman, thoughtleſs through wit, indiſcreet through ſimplicity, but religious on principle.

As there is no part of the appendage to a wife, which I have ever more dreaded than a Machiavelian mother, I ſhould have been deaf to wit and blind to beauty, and dead to advances, had their united batteries been directed againſt me. But I had not the ambition to aſpire to that honour. I was much too low a mark for her lofty aim. She had a natural antipathy to every name that could not be found in the red book.

book. She equally ſhrunk from untitled opulence and indigent nobility. She knew by inſtinct if a younger ſon was in the room, and by a petrifying look checked his moſt diſtant approaches; while with her powerful ſpells ſhe never failed to draw within her magic circle the ſplendid heir, and charm him to her purpoſe.

Highly born herſelf, ſhe had early been married to a rich man of inferior rank, for the ſake of a large ſettlement. Her plan, was, that her daughters (who by the way are modeſt and eſtimable) ſhould find in the man they married, ſtill higher birth than her own, and more riches than her huſband's.

It was a curious ſpeculation to compare theſe two friends, and to obſerve how much leſs the refined manœuvres of Mrs. Fentham anſwered, than the open aſſaults of the intrepid Lady Bab. All the intricacies and labyrinths which the former has been ſo ſkilful and ſo patient in weaving, have not yet enthralled one captive, while the com-

poſed effrontery, the affecting to take for granted the offer which was never meant to be made, and treating that as concluded, which was never ſo much as intended, drew the unconſcious victim of the other into the trap, before he knew it was ſet. The depth of her plot conſiſting in not appearing to have any. It was a novelty in intrigue. An originality which defied all competition, and in which no imitator has any chance of ſucceſs.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

SIR John carried me one morning to call on Lady Denham, a dowager of faſhion, who had grown old in the trammels of the world. Though ſhe ſeems reſolved to die in the harneſs, yet ſhe piques herſelf on being very religious, and no one inveighs againſt infidelity or impiety with more pointed cenſure. "She has a grand-daughter," ſaid Sir John, "who lives with her, and whom ſhe has trained to walk preciſely in her own ſteps, and which, ſhe thinks, *is the way ſhe ſhould go.* The girl," added he ſmiling, "is well looking, and will have a handſome fortune, and I am perſuaded that, as my friend, I could procure you a good reception."

We were ſhewn into her dreſſing room, where we found her with a book lying open before her. From a glance which I caught of the large black letter, I ſaw it was a

Week's Preparation. This book it ſeems conſtantly lay open before her from breakfaſt till dinner, at this ſeaſon. It was Paſſion week. But as this is the room in which ſhe ſees all her morning viſitors, to none of whom is ſhe ever denied, even at this period of retreat, ſhe could only pick up momentary ſnatches of reading in the ſhort intervals between one perſon bowing out and another courteſying in. Miſs Denham ſat by, painting flowers.

Sir John aſked her Ladyſhip, if ſhe would go and dine in a family way with Lady Belfield. She drew up, looked grave and ſaid with much ſolemnity, that ſhe ſhould never think of dining abroad at this holy ſeaſon. Sir John ſaid, "as we have neither cards nor company, I thought you might as well have eaten your chicken in my houſe as in your own." But though ſhe thought it a ſin to dine with a ſober family, ſhe made herſelf amends for the ſacrifice, by letting us ſee that her heart was brimfull of the world, preſſed down and running over. She indemnified

demnified herſelf for her abſtinence from its diverſions by indulging in the only pleaſures which ſhe thought compatible with the ſanctity of the ſeaſon, uncharitable goſſip, and unbounded calumny. She would not touch a card for the world, but ſhe played over to Sir John the whole game of the preceding Saturday night; told him by what a ſhameful inattention her partner had loſt the odd trick; and that ſhe ſhould not have been beaten after all, had not her adverſary, ſhe verily believed, contrived to look over her hand.

Sir John ſeized the only minute in which we were alone, to aſk her to add a guinea to a little ſum he was collecting for a poor tradeſman with a large family, who had been burnt out a few nights ago. "His wife," added he, "was your favourite maid Dixon, and both are deſerving people."—"Ah, poor Dixon! She was always unlucky," replied the Lady. "How could they be ſo careleſs? ſurely they might have put the fire out ſooner. They ſhould not

have let it get a-head. I wonder people are not more active."—"It is too late to enquire about that," ſaid Sir John, "the queſtion now is, not how their loſs might have been prevented, but how it may be repaired."—"I am really quite ſorry," ſaid ſhe, "that I can give you nothing. I have had ſo many calls lately, that my charity purſe is completely exhauſted—and that abominable Property-tax makes me quite a beggar."

While ſhe was ſpeaking, I glanced on the open leaf at, "Charge them that are rich in this world that they be ready to give;" and directing my eye further, it fell on, "Be not deceived. God is not mocked." Theſe were the awful paſſages which formed a part of her *Preparation*, and this was the practical uſe ſhe made of them!

A dozen perſons of both ſexes "had their exits and their entrances" during our ſtay; for the ſcene was ſo ſtrange, and the character ſo new to me, that I felt unwilling to ſtir. Among other viſitors was Signor Squallini,

Squallini, a favourite opera ſinger, whom ſhe patronized. Her face was lighted up with joy at the ſight of him. He brought her an admired new air in which he was preparing himſelf, and ſung a few notes, that ſhe might ſay ſhe had heard it the firſt. She felt all the dignity of the privilege, and extolled the air with all the phraſes, cant and rapture of *dilettanteiſm*.

After this, ſhe drew a paper from between the leaves of her ſtill open book, which ſhe ſhewed him. It contained a liſt of all the company ſhe had engaged to attend his benefit. "I will call on ſome others," ſaid ſhe, "to-morrow after prayers." I am ſorry this is a week in which I cannot ſee my friends at their aſſemblies, but on Sunday you know it will be over, and I ſhall have my houſe full in the evening. Next Monday will be Eaſter, and I ſhall be at our dear Ducheſs's private maſquerade, and then I hope to ſee and engage the whole world.—Here are ten guineas," ſaid ſhe, in a half whiſper to the obſequious Signor,

"you may mention what I gave for *my* ticket, and it may ſet the faſhion going." She then preſſed a ticket on Sir John and another on me. He declined, ſaying with great *ſang froid*, "You know we are *Handelians*." What excuſe I made I do not well know; I only know that I ſaved my ten guineas with a very bad grace, but felt bound in conſcience to add them to what I had before ſubſcribed to poor Dixon.

Hitherto I had never ſeen the gnat-ſtrainer, and the camel-ſwallower, ſo ſtrikingly exemplified. And it is obſervable how forcibly the truth of Scripture is often illuſtrated by thoſe who live in the boldeſt oppoſition to it. If you have any doubt while you are reading, go into the world and your belief will be confirmed.

As we took our leave, ſhe followed us to the door. I hoped it was with the guinea for the fire; but ſhe only whiſpered Sir John, though he did not go himſelf, to prevail on ſuch and ſuch ladies to go to Squallini's

Squallini's benefit. "Pray do," ſaid ſhe, "it will be a charity. Poor fellow! he is ſadly out at elbows, he has a fine liberal ſpirit, and can hardly make his large income do."

When we got into the ſtreet we admired the ſplendid chariot and laced liveries of this *indigent* profeſſor, for whom our charity had been juſt ſolicited, and whoſe "liberal ſpirit," my friend aſſured me, conſiſted in ſumptuous living, and the indulgence of every faſhionable vice.

I could not reſtrain my exclamations as ſoon as we got out of hearing. To Sir John, the ſcene was amuſing, but to him it had loſt the intereſt of novelty. "I have known her ladyſhip about twelve years," ſaid he, "and of courſe have witneſſed a dozen of theſe annual paroxyſms of devotion. I am perſuaded that ſhe is a gainer by them on her own principle, that is, in the article of pleaſure. This ſhort periodical abſtinence whets her appetite to a keener reliſh for ſuſpended enjoyment; and while ſhe faſts from amuſements, her blinded

blinded conſcience enjoys the feaſts of ſelf-gratulation. She feeds on the remembrance of her ſelf-denial, even after ſhe has returned to thoſe delights which ſhe thinks her retreat has fairly purchaſed. She conſiders religion as a ſyſtem of pains and penalties, by the voluntary enduring of which, for a ſhort time, ſhe ſhall compound for all the indulgences of the year. She is perſuaded that ſomething muſt be annually forborne, in order to make her peace. After theſe periodical atonements, the Almighty being in her debt, will be obliged at laſt to pay her with heaven. This compoſition, which rather brings her in on the creditor ſide, not only quiets her conſcience for the paſt, but enables her joyfully to enter on a new ſcore."

I aſked Sir John, how Lady Belfield *could* aſſociate with a woman of a character ſo oppoſite to her own? "What can we do?" ſaid he, "we cannot be ſingular. We muſt conform *a little* to the world in which we live." Truſting to his extreme good-nature, and fired at the ſcene to which

I had

I had been a witneſs, I ventured to obſerve, that non-conformity to ſuch a world as that of which this lady was a ſpecimen, was the very criterion of the religion taught by Him who had declared by way of pre-eminent diſtinction, that "his kingdom was not of this world."

"You are a young man," anſwered he mildly, "and this delicacy and theſe prejudices would ſoon wear off, if you were to live ſome time in the world."—"My dear Sir John," ſaid I warmly, "by the grace of God, I never *will* live in the world; at leaſt, I never will aſſociate with that part of it, whoſe ſociety would be ſure to wear off that delicacy and remove thoſe prejudices. Why this is retaining all the worſt part of popery. Here is the abſtinence without the devotion; the outward obſervance without the interior humiliation. It is ſuſpending of ſin, not only without any deſign of forſaking it, but with a fixed reſolution of returning to it, and of increaſing the guſt by the forbearance. Nay, the ſins ſhe retains in order to mitigate the horrors

of

of forbearance, are as bad as thoſe ſhe lays down. A poſtponed ſin, which is fully intended to be reſumed, is as much worſe than a ſin perſiſted in, as deliberate hypocriſy is worſe than the impulſe of paſſion. I deſire not a more explicit comment on a text, which I was once almoſt tempted to think unjuſt; I mean, the greater facility of the entrance of groſs and notorious offenders into heaven, than of theſe formaliſts. No! if Miſs Denham were ſole heireſs to Crœſus, and joined the beauty of Cleopatra to the wit of Sappho, I never would connect myſelf with a diſciple of that ſchool."

"How many ways there are of being unhappy!" ſaid Sir John, as we returned one day from a ride we had taken ſome miles out of town, to call on a friend of his. "Mr. Stanhope, whom we have juſt quitted, is a man of great elegance of mind. His early life was paſſed in liberal ſtudies, and in the beſt company. But his fair proſpects were blaſted by a diſproportionate marriage. He was drawn in by a vanity too natural to young

young men, that of fancying himſelf preferred by a woman, who had no one recommendation but beauty. To be admired by her, whom all his acquaintance admired, gratified his *amour propre*. He was overcome by her marked attentions ſo far as to declare himſelf, without knowing her real diſpoſition. It was ſome time before his prepoſſeſſion allowed him to diſcover that ſhe was weak and ill informed, ſelfiſh and bad tempered. What ſhe wanted in underſtanding, ſhe made up in ſpirit. The more ſhe exacted, the more he ſubmitted; and her demands grew in proportion to his ſacrifices. My friend, with patient affection ſtruggled for a long time to raiſe her character, and to enlighten her mind; and finding that ſhe pouted whenever he took up a book, and that ſhe even hid the newſpaper before he had read it, complaining that he preferred any thing to her company the ſoftneſs of his temper and his habitual indolence at length prevailed. His better judgement ſunk in the hopeleſs conteſt. For a quiet life, he has ſubmitted to a diſ-

graceful

graceful life. The compromiſe has not anſwered. He has incurred the degradation, which, by a more ſpirited conduct, he might have avoided, and has miſſed the quiet which he ſacrificed his dignity to purchaſe. He compaſſionates her folly, and continues to tranſlate her wearisome interruptions into the flattering language of affection.

"In compliment to her, no leſs than in juſtification of his own choice, he has perſuaded himſelf that all women are pretty much alike. That in point of capacity, diſpoſition, and knowlege, he has but drawn the common lot, with the balance in his favour, of ſtrong affection and unſullied virtue. He hardly ever ſees his fine library, which is the object of her ſupreme averſion, but waſtes his days in liſtleſs idleneſs and his evenings at cards, the only thing in which ſhe takes a lively intereſt. His fine mind is, I fear, growing mean and diſingenuous. The gentleneſs of his temper leads him not only to ſacrifice his peace, but to infringe on his veracity in order to keep her quiet.

"All

"All the entertainment he finds at dinner is a recapitulation of the faults of her maids, or the impertinence of her footmen, or the negligence of her gardener. If to pleaſe her he joins in the cenſure, ſhe turns ſuddenly about, and defends them. If he vindicates them, ſhe inſiſts on their immediate diſmiſſion; and no ſooner are they irrevocably diſcharged, than ſhe is continually dwelling on their perfections, and then it is only their ſucceſſors who have any faults.

"He is now ſo afraid of her driving out his few remaining old ſervants, if ſhe ſees his partiality for them, that in order to conceal it he affects to reprimand them, as the only means for them to ſecure her favour. Thus the integrity of his heart is giving way to a petty duplicity, and the openneſs of his temper to ſhabby artifices. He could ſubmit to the loſs of his comfort, but ſenſibly feels the diminution of his credit. The loſs of his uſefulneſs too is a conſtant ſource of regret. She will not

even

even ſuffer him to act as a magiſtrate, leſt her doors ſhould be beſet with vagabonds, and her houſe dirtied by men in buſineſs. If he chance to commend a diſh he has taſted at a friend's houſe — "Yes, every body's things are good but her's — ſhe can never pleaſe — he had better always dine abroad, if nothing is fit to be eaten at home."

"Though poor Stanhope's conduct is ſo correct, and his attachment to his wife ſo notorious, he never ventures to commend any thing that is ſaid or done by another woman. She has, indeed, no definite object of jealouſy, but feels an uneaſy, vague ſenſation of envy, at any thing or perſon he admires. I believe ſhe would be jealous of a fine day, if her huſband praiſed it.

"If a tale reaches her ears of a wife who has failed of her duty, or if the public papers record a divorce, then ſhe awakens her huſband to a ſenſe of his ſuperior happineſs, and her own irreproachable virtue. O Charles, the woman who, repoſing on the

laurels of her boaſted virtue, allows herſelf to be a diſobliging, a peeviſh, a gloomy, a diſcontented companion, defeats one great end of the inſtitution, which is happineſs. The wife who violates the marriage vow, is indeed more criminal; but the very magnitude of her crime emancipates her huſband; while ſhe who makes him not diſhonourable, but wretched, faſtens on him a miſery for life, from which no laws can free him, and under which religion alone can ſupport him.

We continued talking till we reached home, on the multitude of marriages in which the parties are "joined not matched," and where the term *union* is a miſerable miſnomer. I endeavoured to turn all theſe new acquaintances to account, and conſidered myſelf at every viſit I made, as taking a leſſon for my own conduct. I beheld the miſcarriages of others, not only with concern for the individual, but as beacons to light me on my way. It was no breach of charity to uſe the aberrations of

my acquaintance for the purpoſe of making my own courſe more direct. I took care, however, never to loſe ſight of the humbling conſideration that my own deviations were equally liable to become the object of their animadverſion, if the ſame motive had led them to the ſame ſcrutiny.

I remained ſome weeks longer in town indulging myſelf in all its ſafe ſights, and all its ſober pleaſures. I examined whatever was new in art, or curious in ſcience. I found out the beſt pictures, ſaw the beſt ſtatues, explored the beſt muſeums, heard the beſt ſpeakers in the courts of law, the beſt preachers in the church, and the beſt orators in parliament; attended the beſt lectures, and viſited the beſt company, in the moſt correct, though not always the moſt faſhionable ſenſe of the term. I aſſociated with many learned, ſenſible, and ſome pious men, commodities, with which London, with all its faults, abounds, perhaps, more than any other place on the habitable globe. I became acquainted with many agreeable,

well

well informed, valuable women, with a few who even ſeemed in a good meaſure to live above the world while they were living in it.

There is a large claſs of excellent female characters, who on account of that very excellence, are little known, becauſe to be known is not their object. Their ambition has a better taſte. They paſs through life honoured and reſpected in their own ſmall but not unimportant ſphere, and approved by him, "whoſe they are and whom they ſerve,"* though their faces are hardly known in promiſcuous ſociety. If they occaſion little ſenſation abroad, they produce much happineſs at home. And when once a woman who has "all appliances and means to get it," *can* withſtand the intoxication of the flatterer, and the adoration of the faſhionable; *can* conquer the fondneſs for public diſtinction, *can* reſiſt the temptations of that magic circle to which ſhe is courted, and in which ſhe is qualified to ſhine — this is indeed a trial of firmneſs; a trial which thoſe who have never

been called to reſiſt themſelves, can hardly judge of the merit of reſiſtance in others.

Theſe are the women who bleſs, dignify, and truly adorn ſociety. The painter indeed does not make his fortune by their ſitting to him; the jeweller is neither brought into vogue by furniſhing their diamonds, nor undone by not being paid for them; the proſperity of the milliner does not depend on affixing their name to a cap or a colour; the poet does not celebrate them; the novelliſt does not dedicate to them; but they poſſeſs the affection of their huſbands, the attachment of their children, the eſteem of the wiſe and good, and above all they poſſeſs *his* favour, "whom to know is life eternal." Among theſe I doubt not I might have found objects highly deſerving of my heart, but the injunction of my father was a ſort of panoply which guarded it.

I am perſuaded that ſuch women compoſe a larger portion of the ſex, than is generally

generally allowed. It is not the number, but the noiſe which makes a ſenſation, and a ſet of fair dependent young creatures who are every night forced, ſome of them reluctantly, upon the public eye; and a bevy of faded matrons rouged and repaired for an ungrateful public, dead to their blandiſhments, do not compoſe the whole female world! I repeat it — a hundred amiable women, who are living in the quiet practice of their duties, and the modeſt exertion of their talents, do not fill the public eye, or reach the public ear, like one aſpiring leader, who, hungering for obſervation, and diſdaining cenſure, dreads not abuſe but oblivion; who thinks it more glorious to head a little phalanx of faſhionable followers, than to hold out, as from her commanding eminence, and impoſing talents ſhe might have done, a ſhining example of all that is great, and good, and dignified in woman. Theſe ſelf-appointed queens maintain an abſolute but ephemeral empire over that little

fantaſtic ariſtocracy which they call the world. — Admiration beſets them, crowds attend them, conqueſts follow them, inferiors imitate them, rivals envy them, newſpapers extol them, ſonnets deify them. A few oſtentatious charities are oppoſed as a large atonement for a *few amiable weaknesſes*, while the unpaid tradeſman is expoſed to ruin by their vengeance if he refuſe to truſt them, and to a gaol if he continue to do it.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

THE three days previous to my leaving London were paſſed with Sir John and Lady Belfield. Knowing I was on the wing for Hampſhire, they promiſed to make their long intended viſit to Stanley-Grove during my ſtay there.

On the firſt of theſe days, we were agreeably ſurprized at the appearance of Dr. Barlow, an old friend of Sir John, and the excellent rector of Mr. Stanley's pariſh. Being obliged to come to town on urgent buſineſs for a couple of days, he was charged to aſſure me of the cordial welcome, which awaited me at the Grove. I was glad to make this early acquaintance with this highly reſpectable divine. I made a thouſand enquiries about his neighbours, and expreſſed my impatience to know more of a family, in whoſe characters I already felt a more than common intereſt.

"Sir," said he, "if you set me talking of Mr. Stanley, you must abide by the consequences of your indiscretion, and bear with the loquacity, of which that subject never fails to make me guilty. He is a greater blessing to me as a friend, and to my parish as an example and a benefactor, than I can describe." I assured him that he could not be too minute in speaking of a man, whom I had been early taught to admire, by that exact judge of merit my late father.

"Mr. Stanley," said the worthy Doctor, "is about six and forty, his admirable wife is about six or seven years younger. He passed the early part of his life in London, in the best society. His commerce with the world was, to a mind like his, all pure gain; for he brought away from it all the good it had to give, without exchanging for it one particle of his own integrity. He acquired the air, manners, and sentiments of a gentleman, without any sacrifice of his sincerity. Indeed he may be said to have

turned

turned his knowledge of the world to a religious account, for it has enabled him to recommend religion to thoſe, who do not like it well enough to forgive, for its ſake, the leaſt aukwardneſs of geſture, or inelegance of manner.

"When I became acquainted with the family, continued he, "I told Mrs. Stanley that I was afraid her huſband hurt religion in one ſenſe, as much as he recommended it in another; for that ſome men who would forgive him his piety for the ſake of his agreeableneſs, would be led to diſlike religion more than ever in other men, in whom the jewel was not ſo well ſet. "We ſhould like your religious men well enough," will they ſay, "if they all reſembled Stanley." Whereas the truth is, they do not ſo much *like* Mr. Stanley's religion, as *bear* with it for the pleaſure which his other qualities afford them. She aſſured me, that this was not altogether the caſe, for that his other qualities having pioneer'd his way, and hewed down the pre-

prejudices which the reputation of piety naturally raiſes, his endeavours to be uſeful to them were much facilitated, and he not only kept the ground he had gained, but was often able to turn this influence over his friends to a better account than they had intended. He converted their admiration of him into arms againſt their own errors.

"He poſſeſſes in perfection," continued Dr. Barlow, "that ſure criterion of abilities, a great power over the minds of his acquaintance, and has in a high degree that rare talent, the art of conciliation without the aid of flattery. I have ſeen more men brought over to his opinion by a management derived from his knowledge of mankind, and by a principle which forbad his ever uſing this knowledge but for good purpoſes, than I ever obſerved in any other inſtance; and this without the ſlighteſt deviation from his ſcrupulous probity.

"He is maſter of one great advantage in converſation, that of not only knowing

what

what to ſay that may be uſeful, but exactly *when* to ſay it; in knowing when to preſs a point and when to forbear; in his ſparing the ſelf-love of a vain man, whom he wiſhes to reclaim, by contriving to make him feel himſelf wrong without making him appear ridiculous. The former he knows is eaſily pardoned, the latter never. He has ſtudied the human heart long enough to know that to wound pride is not the way to cure but to inflame it; and that exaſperating ſelf-conceit, will never ſubdue it. He ſeldom, I believe, goes into company without an earneſt deſire to be uſeful to ſome one in it; but if circumſtances be adverſe; if the *mollia tempora fandi* do not preſent themſelves; he knows he ſhould loſe more than they would gain, by trying to make the occaſion when he does not find it. And I have often heard him ſay, that when he cannot improve others, or be benefited by them, he endeavours to benefit himſelf by the diſappointment, which does his own mind as much good by humbling him with the

the ſenſe of his own uſeleſſneſs, as the ſubject he wiſhed to have introduced, might have done them.

"The death of his only ſon, about ſix years ago, who had juſt entered his eighth year, is the only interruption his family have had to a felicity ſo unbroken, that I told Mr. Stanley ſome ſuch calamity was neceſſary to convince him that he was not to be put off with ſo poor a portion as this world has to give. I added, that I ſhould have been tempted to doubt his being in the favour of God, if he had totally eſcaped chaſtiſement. A circumſtance which to many parents would have greatly aggravated the blow, rather lightened it to him. The boy, had he lived to be of age, was to have had a large independent fortune from a diſtant relation, which will now go to a remote branch, unleſs there ſhould be another ſon. "This wealth," ſaid he to me, "might have proved the boy's ſnare, and this independence his deſtruction. He who does all things well, has afflicted the parents,

parents, but he has ſaved the child." The loſs of an only ſon, however, ſat heavy on his heart, but it was the means of enabling him to glorify God by his ſubmiſſion; I ſhould rather ſay by his acquieſcence. Submiſſion is only yielding to what we cannot help. Acquieſcence is a more ſublime kind of reſignation. It is a conviction that the divine will is holy, juſt, and good. He one day ſaid to me, "we were too fond of the mercy, but not ſufficiently grateful for it. We loved him ſo paſſionately that we might have forgotten who beſtowed him. To preſerve us from this temptation, God in great mercy withdrew him. Let us turn our eyes from the one bleſſing we have loſt, to the countleſs mercies which are continued to us, and eſpecially to the hand which confers them; to the hand which, if we continue to murmur, may ſtrip us of our remaining bleſſings."

"I cannot," continued Dr. Barlow, "make a higher eulogium of Mrs. Stanley, than to ſay, that ſhe is every way worthy

of

of the huſband whoſe happineſs ſhe makes. They have a large family of lovely daughters of all ages. Lucilla, the eldeſt, is near nineteen; you would think me too poetical were I to ſay ſhe adorns every virtue with every grace; and yet I ſhould only ſpeak the ſimple truth. Phœbe, who is juſt turned of fifteen, has not leſs vivacity and ſweetneſs than her ſiſter, but, from her extreme naiveté and warm-heartedneſs, ſhe has ſomewhat leſs diſcretion; and her father ſays, that her education has afforded him not leſs pleaſure but more trouble, for the branches ſhot ſo faſt as to call for more pruning."

Before I had time to thank the good Doctor for his intereſting little narrative, a loud rap announced company. It was Lady Bab Lawleſs. With her uſual verſatility ſhe plunged at once into every ſubject with every body. She talked to Lady Belfield of the news and her nurſery, of poetry with Sir John, of politics with me, and religion with Dr. Barlow. She talked well upon

upon moſt of theſe points, and not ill upon any of them. For ſhe had the talent of embelliſhing ſubjects of which ſhe knew but little, and a kind of conjectural ſagacity and raſh dexterity, which prevented her from appearing ignorant, even when ſhe knew nothing. She thought that a full confidence in her own powers was the ſure way to raiſe them in the eſtimation of others, and it generally ſucceeded.

Turning ſuddenly to Lady Belfield, ſhe ſaid, "Pray my dear, look at my flowers." "They are beautiful roſes indeed," ſaid Lady Belfield, "and as exquiſitely exact as if they were artificial." — "Which in truth they are," replied Lady Bab. "Your miſtake is a high compliment to them, but not higher than they deſerve. Look eſpecially at theſe roſes in my cap. You poſitively ſhall go and get ſome at the ſame place." "Indeed," ſaid Lady Belfield, "I am thinking of laying aſide flowers, though my children are hardly old enough to take to them." "What affecta-

tion!" replied Lady Bab, "why you are not above two or three and thirty; I am almoſt as old again, and yet I don't think of giving up flowers to my children, or my grandchildren, who will be ſoon wanting them. Indeed, I only now wear *white* roſes." I diſcovered by this, that white roſes made the ſame approximation to ſobriety in dreſs, that three tables made to it in cards. "Seriouſly though," continued Lady Bab, "you muſt and ſhall go and buy ſome of Fanny's flowers. I need only tell you, it will be the greateſt charity you ever did, and then I know you won't reſt till you have been. A beautiful girl maintains her dying mother by making and ſelling flowers. Here is her direction," throwing a card on the table. "Oh no, this is not it. I have forgot the name, but it is within two doors of your hair-dreſſer, in what d'ye call the lane, juſt out of Oxford-ſtreet. It is a poor miſerable hole, but her roſes are as bright as if they grew in the gardens of Armida." She

now

now rung the bell violently, ſaying ſhe had overſtaid her time, though ſhe had not been in the houſe ten minutes.

Next morning I attended Lady Belfield to the exhibition. In driving home through one of the narrow paſſages near Oxford-ſtreet, I obſerved that we were in the ſtreet where the poor flower-maker lived. Lady Belfield directed her footman to enquire for the houſe. We went into it, and in a ſmall but clean room up three pair of ſtairs, we found a very pretty and very genteel young girl at work on her gay manufacture. The young woman preſented her elegant performances with an air of uncommon grace and modeſty.

She was the more intereſting, becauſe the delicacy of her appearance ſeemed to proceed from ill health, and a tear ſtood in her eye while ſhe exhibited her works. "You do not ſeem well, my dear," ſaid Lady Belfield, with a kindneſs which was natural to her. "I never care about my

own health, madam," replied ſhe, "but I fear my dear mother is dying." She ſtopped, and the tears which ſhe had endeavoured to reſtrain, now flowed plentifully down her cheeks. "Where is your mother, child?" ſaid Lady Belfield. "In the next room, Madam." "Let us ſee her," ſaid her Ladyſhip, "if it won't too much diſturb her." So ſaying, ſhe led the way, and I followed her.

We found the ſick woman lying on a little poor, but clean bed, pale and emaciated, but ſhe did not ſeem ſo near her end as Fanny's affection had made her apprehend. After ſome kind expreſſions of concern, Lady Belfield enquired into their circumſtances, which ſhe found were deplorable. "But for that dear girl, madam, I ſhould have periſhed with want," ſaid the good woman; ſince our misfortunes I have had nothing to ſupport me but what ſhe earns by making theſe flowers. She has ruined her own health, by ſitting up the greateſt part of the night

to

to procure me neceſſaries, while ſhe herſelf lives on a cruſt."

I was ſo affected with this ſcene, that I drew Lady Belfield into the next room. "If we cannot preſerve the mother, at leaſt let us ſave the daughter from deſtruction," ſaid I; "you may command my purſe." "I was thinking of the ſame thing," ſhe replied. "Pray, my good girl, what ſort of education have you had?" "O, Madam," ſaid ſhe, "one much too high for my ſituation. But my parents, intending to qualify me for a governeſs, as the ſafeſt way of providing for me, have had me taught every thing neceſſary for that employment. I have had the beſt maſters, and I hope I have not miſemployed my time." "How comes it then," ſaid I, "that you were not placed out in ſome family?" "What, Sir! and leave my dear mother helpleſs and forlorn? I had rather live only on my tea and dry bread, which indeed I have done for many months, and ſupply her little wants, than

enjoy all the luxuries in the world at a diſtance from her."

"What were your misfortunes occaſioned by?" ſaid I, while Lady Belfield was talking with the mother. "One trouble followed another, Sir," ſaid ſhe, "but what moſt completely ruined us, and ſent my father to priſon, and brought a paralytic ſtroke on my mother, was his being arreſted for a debt of ſeven hundred pounds. This ſum, which he had promiſed to pay, was long due to him for laces, and to my mother for millinery and fancy dreſſes, from a lady who has not paid it to this moment, and my father is dead, and my mother dying! This ſum would have ſaved them both!"

She was turning away to conceal the exceſs of her grief, when a venerable clergyman entered the room. It was the rector of the pariſh, who came frequently to adminiſter ſpiritual conſolation to the poor woman. Lady Belfield knew him ſlightly,

ſlightly, and highly reſpected his character. She took him aſide, and queſtioned him as to the diſpoſition and conduct of theſe people, eſpecially the young woman. His teſtimony was highly ſatisfactory. The girl, he ſaid, had not only an excellent education, but her underſtanding and principles were equally good. He added, that he reckoned her beauty among her misfortunes. It made good people afraid to take her into the houſe, and expoſed her to danger from thoſe of the oppoſite deſcription.

I put my purſe into Lady Belfield's hands, declining to make any preſent myſelf, leſt after the remark he had juſt made, I ſhould incur the ſuſpicions of the worthy clergyman.

We promiſed to call again the next day, and took our leave, but not till we had poſſeſſed ourſelves of as many flowers as ſhe could ſpare. I begged that we might ſtop and ſend ſome medical aſſiſtance to

the ſick woman, for though it was evident that all relief was hopeleſs, yet it would be a comfort to the affectionate girl's heart to know that nothing was omitted which might reſtore her mother.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

In the evening we talked over our little adventure with Sir John, who entered warmly into the diſtreſſes of Fanny, and was inclined to adopt our opinion, that if her character and attainments ſtood the teſt of a ſtrict enquiry, ſhe might hereafter probably be tranſplanted into their family as governeſs. We were interrupted in the formation of this plan by a viſit from Lady Melbury, the acknowledged queen of beauty and of ton. I had long been acquainted with her character, for her charms and her accompliſhments were the theme of every man of faſhion, and the envy of every modiſh woman.

She is one of thoſe admired but pitiable characters, who, ſent by Providence as an example to their ſex, degrade themſelves into a warning. Warm-hearted, feeling,

liberal on the one hand; on the other, vain, ſentimental, romantic, extravagantly addicted to diſſipation and expence, and with that union of contrarieties which diſtinguiſhes her, equally devoted to poetry and gaming, to liberality and injuſtice. She is too handſome to be envious, and too generous to have any reliſh for detraction, but ſhe gives to exceſs into the oppoſite fault. As Lady Denham can detect blemiſhes in the moſt perfect, Lady Melbury finds perfections in the moſt depraved. From a judgement which cannot diſcriminate, a temper which will not cenſure, and a hunger for popularity, which can feed on the coarſeſt applauſe, ſhe flatters egregiouſly and univerſally, on the principle of being paid back uſuriouſly in the ſame coin. Prodigal of her beauty, ſhe exiſts but on the homage paid to it from the drawing-room at St. James's, to the mob at the opera houſe door. Candour in her is as miſchievous as calumny in others, for it buoys up characters which ought to ſink. Not content

content with being blind to the bad qualities of her favourites, ſhe invents good ones for them, and you would ſuppoſe her corrupt "little ſenate" was a choir of ſeraphims.

A recent circumſtance related by Sir John was quite characteriſtical. Her favourite maid was dangerouſly ill, and earneſtly begged to ſee her lady, who always had loaded her with favours. To all company ſhe talked of the virtues of the poor Toinette for whom ſhe not only expreſſed, but felt real compaſſion. Inſtead of one apothecary, who would have ſufficed, two phyſicians were ſent for; and ſhe herſelf reſolved to go up and viſit her, as ſoon as ſhe had finiſhed ſetting to muſic an elegy on the death of her Java ſparrow. Juſt as ſhe had completed it, ſhe received a freſh intreaty to ſee her maid, and was actually got to the door in order to go up ſtairs, when the milliner came in with ſuch a diſtracting variety of beautiful new things, that there was no poſſibility of letting them go till

till she had tried every thing on, one after the other. This took up no little time. To determine which she should keep and which return, where all was so attractive, took up still more. After numberless vicissitudes and fluctuations of racking thought, it was at length decided she should take the whole. The milliner withdrew; the lady went up—Toinette had just expired.

I found her manners no less fascinating than her person. With all her modish graces, there was a tincture of romance and an appearance of softness and sensibility which gave her the variety of two characters. She was the enchanting woman of fashion, and the elegiac muse.

Lady Belfield had taken care to cover her work table with Fanny's flowers, with a view to attract any chance visitor. Lady Melbury admired them excessively. "You must do more than admire them," said Lady Belfield, "you must buy and recommend." She then told her the affecting scene we had witnessed, and described the amiable

amiable girl who ſupported the dying mother by making theſe flowers. "It is quite enchanting," continued ſhe, reſolving to attack Lady Melbury in her own ſentimental way, "to ſee this ſweet girl twiſting roſe-buds, and forming hyacinths into bouquets." "Dear, how charming!" exclaimed Lady Melbury, "it is really quite touching; I will make a ſubſcription for her and write at the head of the liſt a melting deſcription of her caſe. She ſhall bring me all her flowers, and as many more as ſhe can make. But no, we will make a party, and go and ſee her. You ſhall carry me. How intereſting to ſee a beautiful creature making roſes and hyacinths! her delicate hands and fair complexion muſt be amazingly ſet off by the contraſt of the bright flowers. If it were a coarſe looking girl ſpinning hemp, to be ſure one ſhould pity her, but it would not be half ſo moving. It will be delightful. I will call on you to-morrow, exactly at two, and carry you all. Perhaps," whiſpered ſhe to Lady Belfield, "I may work

up

up the circumſtances into a ſonnet. Do think of a ſtriking title for it. On ſecond thoughts, the ſonnet ſhall be ſent about with the ſubſcription, and I'll get a pretty vignette to ſuit it."

"That fine creature," ſaid Sir John, in an accent of compaſſion, as ſhe went out, "was made for nobler purpoſes. How grievouſly does ſhe fall ſhort of the high expectations her early youth had raiſed! Oh! what a ſad return does ſhe make to Providence for his rich and varied bounties! Vain of her beauty, laviſh of her money, careleſs of her reputation; aſſociating with the worſt company, yet formed for the beſt; living on the adulation of paraſites, whoſe underſtanding ſhe deſpiſes! I grieve to compare what ſhe is with what ſhe might have been, had ſhe married a man of ſpirit, who would prudently have guided and tenderly have reſtrained her. He has ruined her and himſelf by his indifference and eaſineſs of temper. Satisfied with knowing how much ſhe is admired and he envied, he never

never thought of reproving or reſtricting her. He is proud of her, but has no particular delight in her company, and truſting to her honour, lets her follow her own devices while he follows his. She is a ſtriking inſtance of the eccentricity of that bounty which ſprings from mere ſympathy and feeling. Her charity requires ſtage effect; objects that have novelty, and circumſtances which, as Mr. Bayes ſays, "elevate and ſurprize." She loſt when an infant, her mother, a woman of ſenſe and piety; who, had ſhe lived, would have formed the ductile mind of the daughter, turned her various talents into other channels, and raiſed her character to the elevation it was meant to reach. Had ſhe a child, I verily think her ſweet Nature would quite domeſticate her."

"How melancholy," ſaid I, "that ſo ſuperior a woman ſhould live ſo much below her high deſtination! She is doubtleſs deſtitute of any thought of religion."

"You are much miſtaken," replied Sir John. "I will not ſay indeed that ſhe

entertains much thought about it; but she by no means denies its truth, nor neglects occasionally to exhibit its outward and visible signs. She has not yet completely forgotten

All that the nurse and all the priest have taught.

I do not think that, like Lady Denham, she considers it as a commutation, but she preserves it as a habit. A religious exercise however, never interferes with a worldly one. They are taken up in succession, but with this distinction, the worldly business is to be done, the religious one is not altogether to be left undone. She has a moral chemistry which excels in the amalgamation of contradictory ingredients. On a Sunday at Melbury castle if by any strange accident she and her lord happen to be there together, she first reads him a sermon, and plays at cribbage with him the rest of the evening. In town one Sunday when she had a cold, she wrote a very pleasing hymn, and then sat up all night at deep play. She declared if she had been successful, she would have given her winnings

to

to charity; but as ſhe loſt ſome hundreds, ſhe ſaid, ſhe could now with a ſafe conſcience borrow that ſum from her charity purſe, which ſhe had hoped to add to it, to pay her debt of honour."

Next day within two hours of her appointed time, ſhe came, and was complimented by Sir John on her punctuality. "Indeed," ſaid ſhe, "I *am* rather late, but I met with ſuch a faſcinating German novel, that it poſitively chained me to my bed till paſt three. I aſſure you I never loſe time by not riſing. In the courſe of a few winters I have exhauſted half Hookham's catalogue, before ſome of my acquaintance are awake or I myſelf am out of bed."

We ſoon ſtopped at the humble door of which we were in ſearch. Sir John conducted Lady Melbury up the little winding ſtairs. I aſſiſted Lady Belfield. We reached the room, where Fanny was juſt finiſhing a beautiful bunch of jonquils. "How pictureſque," whiſpered Lady Melbury to me!—"Do lend me your pencil; I muſt

I muſt take a ſketch of that ſweet girl with the jonquils in her hand.—My dear creature," continued ſhe, "you muſt not only let me have theſe, but you muſt make me twelve dozen more flowers as faſt as poſſible, and be ſure let me have a great many ſprigs of jeſſamine and myrtle." Then ſnatching up a wreath of various coloured geraniums—"I muſt try this on my head by the glaſs." So ſaying ſhe ran into an adjoining room, the door of which was open; Lady Belfield having before ſtolen into it to ſpeak to the poor invalid.

As ſoon as Lady Melbury got into the room ſhe uttered a loud ſhriek. Sir John and I ran in, and were ſhocked to find her near fainting. "Oh, Belfield," ſaid ſhe, "this is a trick, and a moſt cruel one! Why did you not tell me where you were bringing me? Why did you not tell me the people's name!"—"I have never heard it myſelf," ſaid Sir John; "on my honour I do not underſtand you."—"You know as much of the woman as I know,"

ſaid

ſaid Lady Belfield. "Alas, much more," cried ſhe, as faſt as her tears would give her leave to ſpeak. She retired to the window for air, wringing her hands, and called for a glaſs of water to keep her from fainting. I returned to the ſick woman for an explanation; I ſaw her countenance much changed.

"This, Sir," ſaid ſhe, "is the lady, whoſe debt of ſeven hundred pounds ruined me, and was the death of my huſband." I was thunderſtruck, but went to aſſiſt Lady Melbury, who implored Sir John to go home with her inſtantly, ſaying her coach ſhould come back for us. "But, dear Lady Belfield, do lend me twenty guineas, I have not a ſhilling about me."—"Then, my dear Lady Melbury," ſaid Lady Belfield, "how *could* you order twelve dozen expenſive flowers?"—"Oh," ſaid ſhe, "I did not mean to have paid for them till next year."—"And how," replied Lady Belfield, "could the debt which was not to have been paid for a twelvemonth have re-

lieved the preſſing wants of a creature, who muſt pay ready money for her materials? However, as you are ſo diſtreſſed, we will contrive to do without your money."—"I would pawn my diamond necklace directly," returned ſhe, but ſpeaking lower, "to own the truth, it is already in the jeweller's hands, and I wear a paſte necklace of the ſame form."

Sir John knowing I had been at my banker's that morning, gave me ſuch a ſignificant look as reſtrained my hand, which was already on my pocket-book. In great ſeeming anguiſh, ſhe gave Sir John her hand who conducted her to her coach. As he was leading her down ſtairs, ſhe ſolemnly declared ſhe would never again run in debt, never order more things than ſhe wanted, and above all would never play while ſhe lived. She was miſerable becauſe ſhe durſt not aſk Lord Melbury to pay this woman, he having already given her money three times for the purpoſe, which ſhe had loſt at faro. Then retract-

ing, ſhe proteſted, if ever ſhe *did* touch a card again, it ſhould be for the ſole purpoſe of getting ſomething to diſcharge this debt. Sir John earneſtly conjured her not to lay "that flattering unction to her ſoul," but to convert the preſent vexation into an occaſion of felicity, by making it the memorable and happy æra of abandoning a practice, which injured her fortune, her fame, her principles, and her peace. "Poor thing," ſaid, Sir John, when he repeated this to us,

> Eaſe will recant
> Vows made in pain, as violent and void.

"In an interval of weeping, ſhe told me," added he, "that ſhe was to be at the opera to-night. To the opera, faro will ſucceed, and to-morrow probably the diamond earrings will go to Grey's in purſuit of the necklace."

Lady Belfield inquired of Fanny how it happened that Lady Melbury, who talked with *her*, without ſurprize or emotion, diſcovered ſo much of both at the bare ſight

of her mother. The girl explained this by ſaying, that ſhe had never been in the way while they lived in Bond-ſtreet, when her ladyſhip uſed to come, having been always employed in an upper room or attending her maſters.

Before we parted, effectual meaſures were taken for the comfortable ſubſiſtence of the ſick mother, and for alleviating the ſorrows, and lightening the labours of the daughter, and next morning I ſet out on my journey for Stanley Grove, Sir John and Lady Belfield promiſing to follow me in a few weeks.

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As ſoon as I got into my poſt chaiſe, and fairly turned my back on London, I fell into a variety of reflections on the perſons with whom I had been living. In this ſoliloquy, I was particularly ſtruck with that diſcrepancy of characters, all of which are yet included under the broad comprehenſive appellation

pellation of *Chriſtians*. I found that though all differed widely from each other, they differed ſtill more widely from that rule by which they profeſſed to walk. Yet not one of theſe characters was conſidered as diſreputable. There was not one that was profane or profligate. Not one who would not in converſation have defended Chriſtianity if its truth had been attacked. Not one who derided or even neglected its forms; and who in her own claſs would not have paſſed for religious. Yet how little had any one of them adorned the profeſſion ſhe adopted! Of Mrs. Ranby, Mrs. Fentham, Lady Bab Lawleſs, Lady Denham, Lady Melbury, which of them would not have been ſtartled had her Chriſtianity been called in queſtion? Yet how merely ſpeculative was the religion of even the moſt ſerious among them! How ſuperficial, or inconſiſtent, or miſtaken, or hollow, or hypocritical, or ſelf-deceiving was that of all the others! Had either of them been aſked from what ſource ſhe drew her reli-

gion, ſhe would indignantly have anſwered, from the Bible. Yet if we compare the copy with the model, the Chriſtian with Chriſtianity, how little can we trace the reſemblance! In what particular did their lives imitate the life of Him *who pleaſed not himſelf*, who *did the will of his Father*: who *went about doing good?* How irreconcileable is their faith with the principles which He taught! How diſſimilar their practice with the precepts He delivered; How inconſiſtent their lives with the example He bequeathed! How unfounded their hope of heaven, if an entrance into heaven be reſtricted to thoſe who are *like minded with Chriſt!*

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

My father had been early in life intimately connected with the family of Mr. Stanley. Though this gentleman was his junior by ſeveral years, yet there ſubſiſted between them ſuch a ſimilarity of taſtes, ſentiments, views, and principles, that they lived in the cloſeſt friendſhip; and both their families having in the early part of their lives reſided in London, the occaſions of that thorough mutual knowledge that grows out of familiar intercourſe, were much facilitated. I remembered Mr. Stanley, when I was a very little boy, paying an annual viſit to my father at the priory, and I had retained an imperfect but pleaſing impreſſion of his countenance and engaging manners.

Having had a large eſtate left him in Hampſhire, he ſettled there on his marriage; an intercourſe of letters had kept up the mutual attachment between

him and my father. On the death of each parent, I had received a cordial invitation to come and ſoothe my ſorrows in his ſociety. My father enjoined me that one of my firſt viſits after his death, ſhould be to the Grove; and in truth, I now conſidered my Hampſhire engagement as the *bonne bouche* of my ſouthern excurſion.

I reached Stanley Grove before dinner. I found a ſpacious manſion, ſuited to the ample fortune and liberal ſpirit of its poſſeſſor. I was highly gratified with fine foreſt ſcenery in the approach to the park. The houſe had a noble appearance without, and within it was at once commodious and elegant. It ſtood on the ſouth ſide of a hill, nearer the bottom than the ſummit, and was ſheltered on the north-eaſt by a fine old wood. The park, though it was not very extenſive, was ſtriking from the beautiful inequality of the ground, which was richly clothed with the moſt pictureſque oaks I ever ſaw, interſperſed with ſtately beeches. The grounds were laid out in good

good taſte, but though the hand of modern improvement was viſible, the owner had in one inſtance ſpared

The obſolete prolixity of ſhade,

for which the moſt intereſting of poets ſo pathetically pleads. The poet's plea had ſaved the avenue.

I was cordially welcomed by Mr. and Mrs. Stanley; and by that powerful and inſtantaneous impreſſion which fine ſenſe and good breeding joined to high previous veneration of character, produce on the feelings of the gueſt, I at once felt myſelf at home. All the preliminaries of gradual acquaintance were in a manner ſuperſeded, and I ſoon experienced that warm and affectionate eſteem which ſeemed ſcarcely to require intercourſe to ſtrengthen, or time to confirm it. Mr. Stanley had only a few minutes to preſent me to his lady and two lovely daughters, before we were ſummoned to dinner, to which a conſiderable party had been invited; for the neighbourhood was populous and rather poliſhed.

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The converſation after dinner was rational, animated, and inſtructive. I obſerved that Mr. Stanley loſt no opportunity which fairly offered, for ſuggeſting uſeful reflections. But what chiefly ſtruck me in his manner of converſing was, that without ever preſſing religion unſeaſonably into the ſervice, he had the talent of making the moſt ordinary topics ſubſervient to inſtruction, and of extracting ſome profitable hint, or ſtriking out ſome important light, from ſubjects which in ordinary hands would not have been ſuſceptible of improvement. It was evident that piety was the predominating principle of his mind, and that he was conſulting its intereſts as carefully when prudence made him forbear to preſs it, as when propriety allowed him to introduce it. This piety was rather viſible in the ſentiment than the phraſe. He was of opinion that bad taſte could never advance the intereſts of Chriſtianity. And he gave leſs offence to worldly men, than moſt religious people I have known, becauſe though he would, on no

no human conſideration, abate one atom of zeal, nor lower any doctrine, nor diſguiſe any truth, nor palliate, nor trim, nor compromiſe, yet he never contended for words or trifling diſtinctions. He thought it detracted from no man's piety to bring all his elegance of expreſſion, his correctneſs of taſte, and his accuracy of reaſoning to the ſervice of that cauſe, which lies the neareſt to the heart of every Chriſtian, and demands the beſt exertion of his beſt faculties.

He was alſo forward to promote ſubjects of practical uſe in the affairs of common life, ſuited to the ſeveral circumſtances and purſuits of his gueſts. But he particularly rejoiced that there was ſo broad, and ſafe, and uninclоſed a field as general literature. This he obſerved always ſupplies men of education, with an ample refuge from all vulgar and dangerous and unproductive topics. "If we cannot," ſaid he, "by friendly intercourſe, always raiſe our principles, we may always keep our underſtandings in exerciſe;

exercise; and those authors who supply so peccable a creature as man, with subjects of elegant and innocent discussion, I do not reckon among the lowest benefactors of mankind."

In my further acquaintance with Mr. Stanley, I have sometimes observed with what address he has converted a merely moral passage to a religious purpose. I have known him, when conversing with a man, who would not have relished a more sacred authority, seize on a sentiment in Tully's Offices, for the lowest degree in his scale of morals, and then, gradually ascending, trace and exalt the same thought through Paley or Johnson, or Addison, or Bacon, till he has unsuspectedly landed his opponent in the pure ethics of the gospel, and surprised him into the adoption of a Christian principle.

As I had heard there was a fine little flock of children, I was surprised, and almost disappointed every time the door opened, not to see them appear, for I already began

to

to take an intereſt in all that related to this moſt engaging family. The ladies having, to our great gratification, ſat longer than is uſual at moſt tables, at length obeyed the ſignal of the miſtreſs of the houſe. They withdrew, followed by the Miſs Stanleys,

> With grace
> Which won who ſaw to wiſh their ſtay.

After their departure, the converſation was not changed. There was no occaſion; it could not become more rational, and we did not deſire that it ſhould become leſs pure. Mrs. Stanley and her fair friends had taken their ſhare in it with a good ſenſe and delicacy which raiſed the tone of our ſociety; and we did not give them to underſtand by a loud laugh before they were out of hearing, that we rejoiced in being emancipated from the reſtraint of their preſence.

Mrs. Stanley is a graceful and elegant woman. Among a thouſand other excellencies, ſhe is diſtinguiſhed for her judgment in

in adapting her diſcourſe to the character of her gueſts, and for being ſingularly ſkilful in ſelecting her topics of converſation. I never ſaw a lady who poſſeſſed the talent of diffuſing at her table, ſo much pleaſure to thoſe around her, without the ſmalleſt deviation from her own dignified purity. She aſks ſuch queſtions, as ſtrangers may be likely to gain, at leaſt not to loſe, credit by anſwering; and ſhe ſuits her interrogations to the kind of knowledge they may be ſuppoſed likely to poſſeſs. By this, two ends are anſwered: while ſhe gives her gueſt an occaſion of appearing to advantage, ſhe puts herſelf in the way of gaining ſome information. From want of this diſcernment, I have known ladies aſk a gentleman juſt arrived from the Eaſt Indies, queſtions about America: and others, from the abſence of that true delicacy, which, where it exiſts, ſhews itſelf even on the ſmalleſt occaſions, who have inquired of a perſon how he liked ſuch a book, though ſhe knew, that in the nature of things, there was no probability

probability of his ever having heard of it. Thus assuming an ungenerous superiority herself, and mortifying another by a sense of his own comparative ignorance. If there is any one at table who from his station has least claim to attention, he is sure to be treated with particular kindness by Mrs. Stanley; and the diffident never fail to be encouraged, and the modest to be brought forward, by the kindness and refinement of her attentions.

When we were summoned to the drawing room, I was delighted to see four beautiful children, fresh as health and gay as youth could make them, busily engaged with the ladies. One was romping; another singing; a third was shewing some drawings of birds, the natural history of which she seemed to understand; a fourth had spread a dissected map on the carpet, and had pulled down her eldest sister on the floor, to shew her Copenhagen. It was an animating scene. I could have devoured the sweet creatures. I got credit with the

the little finger by helping her to a line which she had forgotten, and with the pretty geographer by my superior acquaintance with the shores of the Baltic.

In the evening, when the company had left us, I asked Mrs. Stanley how she came so far to deviate from established custom as not to produce her children immediately after dinner? "You must ask me," said Mr. Stanley, smiling, "for it was I who first ventured to suggest this bold innovation. I love my children fondly, but my children I have always at home; I have my friends but seldom; and I do not chuse that any portion of the time that I wish to dedicate to intellectual and social enjoyment, should be broken in upon by another, and an interfering pleasure, which I have always within my reach. At the same time I like my children to see my friends. Company amuses, improves, and polishes them. I therefore consulted with Mrs. Stanley, how we could so manage, as to enjoy our friends without locking up our children. She recommended

commended this expedient. The time ſhe ſaid, ſpent by the ladies from their leaving the dining-room till the gentlemen came in to tea, was often a little heavy, it was rather an interval of anticipation than of enjoyment. Thoſe ladies who had not much *mind*, had ſoon exhauſted their admiration of each other's worked muſlins, and lace-ſleeves, and thoſe who *had*, would be glad to reſt it ſo agreeably. She therefore propoſed to enliven that dull period by introducing the children.

"This little change has not only ſucceeded in our own family, but has been adopted by many of our neighbours. For ourſelves, it has anſwered a double purpoſe. It not only delights the little things, but it delights them with leſs injury than the uſual ſeaſon of their appearance. Our children have always as much fruit as they like, after their own dinner; they do not therefore want or deſire the fruits, the ſweetmeats, the cakes and the wine with which the gueſts, in order to pleaſe mamma,

are too apt to cram them. Beſides, poor little dears, it mixes too much ſelfiſhneſs with the natural delight they have in ſeeing company, by connecting with it the idea of the good things they ſhall get. But by this alteration, we do all in our power to infuſe a little diſintereſtedneſs into the pleaſure they have in coming to us. We love them too tenderly, to crib their little enjoyments, ſo we give them two pleaſures inſtead of one, for they have their deſert and our company in ſucceſſion."

Though I do not approve of too great familiarity with ſervants, yet I think that to an old and faithful domeſtic, ſuperior conſideration is due. My attendant on my preſent tour had lived in our family from his youth, and had the care of me before I can remember. His fidelity and good ſenſe, and I may add his piety, had obtained for him the privilege of free ſpeaking. "Oh, ſir," ſaid he, when he came to attend me next morning, "we are got into the right houſe at laſt. Such a family!

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ſo godly! ſo ſober! ſo charitable! 'Tis all of a piece here, Sir. Mrs. Comfit, the houſekeeper, tells me that her maſter and miſtreſs are the example of all the rich, and the refuge of all the poor in the neighbourhood. And as to Miſs Lucilla, if the bleſſing of them that are ready to periſh, can ſend anybody to heaven, ſhe will go there ſure enough."

This rhapſody of honeſt Edwards warmed my heart, and put me in mind, that I had neglected to inquire after this worthy houſekeeper, who had lived with my grandfather, and was at his death tranſplanted into the family of Mr. Stanley. I paid a viſit, the firſt opportunity, to the good woman in her room, eager to learn more of a family who ſo much reſembled my own parents, and for whom I had already conceived ſomething more tender than mere reſpect.

I congratulated Mrs. Comfit on the happineſs of living in ſo valuable a family. In return, ſhe was even eloquent in their praiſes. "Her miſtreſs," ſhe ſaid, "was

a pattern for ladies, ſo ſtrict, and yet ſo kind! but now indeed Miſs Lucilla has taken almoſt all the family cares from her mamma. The day ſhe was ſixteen, Sir, that is about two years and a half ago, ſhe began to inſpect the houſehold affairs a little, and as her knowledge increaſed, ſhe took more and more upon her. Miſs Phœbe will very ſoon be old enough to relieve her ſiſter; but my miſtreſs won't let her daughters have any thing to do with family affairs, till they are almoſt women grown, both for fear it ſhould take them off from their learning, and alſo give them a low turn about eating and caring for niceties, and lead them into vulgar goſſip, and familiarity with ſervants. It is time enough, ſhe ſays, when their characters are a little formed, they will then gain all the good and eſcape all the danger."

Seeing me liſten with the moſt eager and delighted attention, the worthy woman proceeded. "In ſummer, Sir, Miſs Stanley riſes at ſix, and ſpends two hours

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in her closet, which is stored with the best books. At eight she consults me on the state of provisions, and other family matters, and gives me a bill of fare, subject to the inspection of her mamma. The cook has great pleasure in acting under her direction, because she allows that miss understands when things are well done, and never finds fault in the wrong place; which, she says, is a great mortification in serving ignorant ladies, who praise or find fault by chance, not according to the cook's performance, but their own humour. She looks over my accounts every week, which being kept so short, give her but little trouble, and once a month she settles every thing with her mother.

"'Tis a pleasure, Sir, to see how skilful she is in accounts! One can't impose upon her a farthing if one would; and yet she is so mild and so reasonable! and so quick at distinguishing what are mistakes, and what are wilful faults! Then she is so compassionate! It will be a heart-breaking day

at the Grove, Sir, whenever miſs marries. When my maſter is ſick, ſhe writes his letters, reads to him, and aſſiſts her mamma in nurſing him.

"After her morning's work, Sir, does ſhe come into company, tired and croſs, as ladies do who have done nothing, or are but juſt up? No, ſhe comes in to make breakfaſt for her parents, as freſh as a roſe, and as gay as a lark. An hour after breakfaſt, ſhe and my maſter read ſome learned books together. She then aſſiſts in teaching her little ſiſters, and never were children better inſtructed. One day in a week, ſhe ſets aſide both for them and herſelf to work for the poor, whom ſhe alſo regularly viſits at their own cottages, two evenings in the week; for ſhe ſays it would be troubleſome and look oſtentatious to have her father's doors crouded with poor people, neither could ſhe get at their wants and their characters half ſo well as by going herſelf to their own houſes. My dear miſtreſs has given her a ſmall room as a ſtore-houſe for

for clothing and books for her indigent neighbours. In this room each of the younger daughters, the day ſhe is ſeven years old, has her own drawer, with her name written on it; and almoſt the only competition among them is, whoſe ſhall be ſooneſt filled with caps, aprons, and handkerchiefs. The working day is commonly concluded by one of theſe charitable viſits. The dear creatures are loaded with their little work-baſkets, crammed with neceſſaries. This, Sir, is the day, and it is always looked forward to with pleaſure by them all. Even little Celia, the youngeſt, who is but juſt turned of five, will come to me and beg for ſomething good to put in her baſket for poor Mary or Betty ſuch a one. I wonder I do not ſee any thing of the little darlings; it is about the time they uſed to pay me a viſit.

"On Sundays before church they attend the village ſchool; when the week's pocket money, which has been carefully hoarded for the purpoſe, is produced for rewards to

the moſt deſerving ſcholars. And yet, Sir, with all this, you may be in the houſe a month without hearing a word of the matter; it is all done ſo quietly; and when they meet at their meals they are more cheerful and gay than if they had been ever ſo idle."

Here Mrs. Comfit ſtopped, for juſt then, two ſweet little cherry-cheeked figures preſented themſelves at the door, ſwinging a ſtraw baſket between them, and crying out in a little begging voice, "Pray, Mrs. Comfit, beſtow your charity,—we want ſomething coarſe for the hungry, and ſomething nice for the ſick,—poor Dame Alice and her little grand-daughter!" They were going on, but ſpying me, they coloured up to the ears, and ran away as faſt as they could, though I did all in my power to detain them.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

When Miſs Stanley came in to make breakfaſt, ſhe beautifully exemplified the worthy houſekeeper's deſcription. I have ſometimes ſeen young women, whoſe ſimplicity was deſtitute of elegance, and others in whom a too elaborate poliſh had nearly effaced their native graces: Lucilla appeared to unite the ſimplicity of nature to the refinement of good breeding. It was thus ſhe ſtruck me at firſt ſight. I forbore to form a decided opinion, till I had leiſure to obſerve whether her mind fulfilled all that her looks promiſed.

Lucilla Stanley is rather perfectly elegant than perfectly beautiful. I have ſeen women as ſtriking, but I never ſaw one ſo intereſting. Her beauty is countenance: it is the ſtamp of mind intelligibly printed on the face. It is not ſo much the ſymmetry of

of features, as the joint triumph of intellect and ſweet temper. A fine old poet has well deſcribed her:

Her pure and eloquent blood
Spoke in her cheeks, and ſo diſtinctly wrought,
That one could almoſt ſay her body thought.

Her converſation, like her countenance, is compounded of livelineſs, ſenſibility, and delicacy. She does not ſay things to be quoted, but the effect of her converſation is, that it leaves an impreſſion of pleaſure on the mind, and a love of goodneſs on the heart. She enlivens without dazzling, and entertains without overpowering. Contented to pleaſe, ſhe has no ambition to ſhine. There is nothing like effort in her expreſſion, or vanity in her manner. She has rather a playful gaiety than a pointed wit. Of repartee ſhe has little, and diſlikes it in others; yet I have ſeldom met with a truer taſte for inoffenſive wit. Taſte is indeed the predominating quality of her mind; and ſhe may rather be ſaid to be a nice judge of

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the genius of others, than to be a genius herſelf. She has a quick perception of whatever is beautiful or defective, in compoſition or in character. The ſame true taſte pervades her writing, her converſation, her dreſs, her domeſtic arrangements, and her gardening, for which laſt ſhe has both a paſſion and a talent. Though ſhe has a correct ear, ſhe neither ſings nor plays; and her taſte is ſo exact in drawing, that ſhe really ſeems to have *le compas dans l'œuil*; yet I never ſaw a pencil in her fingers, except to ſketch a ſeat or a bower for the pleaſure ground. Her notions are too juſt to allow her to be ſatisfied with mediocrity in any thing, and for perfection in many things, ſhe thinks that life is too ſhort, and its duties too various and important. Having five younger ſiſters to aſſiſt, ſhe has been induced to neglect ſome acquiſitions which ſhe would have liked. Had ſhe been an only daughter, ſhe owns that ſhe would have indulged a little more in the garniſh and decoration of life.

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At her early age, the ſoundneſs of her judgment on perſons and things cannot be derived from experience; ſhe owes it to a *tact* ſo fine as enables her to ſeize on the ſtrong feature, the prominent circumſtance, the leading point, inſtead of confuſing her mind and diſſipating her attention, on the inferior parts of a character, a book, or a buſineſs. This juſtneſs of thinking teaches her to rate things according to their worth, and to arrange them according to their place. Her manner of ſpeaking adds to the effect of her words, and the tone of her voice expreſſes with ſingular felicity, gaiety or kindneſs, as her feelings direct, and the occaſion demands. This manner is ſo natural, and her ſentiments ſpring ſo ſpontaneouſly from the occaſion, that it is obvious that diſplay is never in her head, nor an eagerneſs for praiſe in her heart. I never heard her utter a word which I could have wiſhed unſaid, or a ſentiment I would have wiſhed unthought.

As to her dreſs, it reminds me of what Dr. Johnſon once ſaid to an acquaintance

of mine, of a lady who was celebrated for dreſſing well. "The beſt evidence that I can give you of her perfection in this reſpect is, that one can never remember what ſhe had on." The dreſs of Lucilla is not neglected, and it is not ſtudied. She is as neat as the ſtricteſt delicacy demands, and as faſhionable as the ſtricteſt delicacy permits; and her nymphlike form does not appear to leſs advantage for being veiled with ſcrupulous modeſty.

Oh! if women in general knew what was their real intereſt! if they could gueſs with what a charm even the *appearance* of modeſty inveſts its poſſeſſor, they would dreſs decorouſly from mere ſelf-love, if not from principle. The deſigning would aſſume modeſty as an artifice, the coquet would adopt it as an allurement, the pure as her appropriate attraction, and the voluptuous as the moſt infallible art of ſeduction.

What I admire in Miſs Stanley, and what I have ſometimes regretted the want of in ſome other women, is, that I am told ſhe is

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ſo lively, ſo playful, ſo deſirous of amuſing her father and mother when alone, that they are ſeldom ſo gay as in their family party. It is then that her talents are all unfolded, and that her livelineſs is without reſtraint. She was rather ſilent the two or three firſt days after my arrival, yet it was evidently not the ſilence of reſerve or inattention, but of delicate propriety. Her gentle frankneſs and undeſigning temper gradually got the better of this little ſhyneſs, and ſhe ſoon began to treat me as the ſon of her father's friend. I very early found, that though a ſtranger might behold her without admiration, it was impoſſible to converſe with her with indifference. Before I had been a week at the Grove, my precautions vaniſhed, my panoply was gone, and yet I had not conſulted Mr. Stanley.

In contemplating the captivating figure and the delicate mind of this charming girl, I felt that imagination, which miſleads ſo many youthful hearts, had preſerved mine. The image my fancy had framed, and which had

had been ſuggeſted by Milton's heroine, had been refined indeed, but it had not been romantic. I had early formed an ideal ſtandard in my mind; too high, perhaps; but its very elevation had reſcued me from the common dangers attending the ſociety of the ſex. I was continually comparing the women with whom I converſed, with the fair conception which filled my mind. The compariſon might be unfair to them; I am ſure it was not unfavourable to myſelf, for it preſerved me from the faſcination of mere perſonal beauty, the allurements of factitious character, and the attractions of ordinary merit.

I am aware that love is apt to throw a radiance round the being it prefers, till it becomes dazzled, leſs, perhaps with the brightneſs of the object itſelf, than with the beams with which imagination has inveſted it. But religion, though it had not ſubdued my imagination, had chaſtiſed it. It had ſobered the ſplendors of fancy, without obſcuring them. It had not extin-

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guiſhed the paſſions, but it had taught me to regulate them.—I now ſeemed to have found the being of whom I had been in ſearch. My mind felt her excellencies, my heart acknowledged its conqueror. I ſtruggled, however, not to abandon myſelf to its impulſes. I endeavoured to keep my own feelings in order, till I had time to appreciate a character, which appeared as artleſs as it was correct. And I did not allow myſelf to make this ſlight ſketch of Lucilla, and of the effect ſhe produced on my heart, till more intimate acquaintance had juſtified my prepoſſeſſion.

But let me not forget that Mr. Stanley has another daughter. If Lucilla's character is more elevated, Phœbe's is not leſs amiable. Her face is equally handſome, but her figure is ſomewhat leſs delicate. She has a fine temper, and ſtrong virtues. The little faults ſhe has, ſeem to flow from the exceſs of her good qualities. Her ſuſceptibility is extreme, and to guide and guard it, finds employment for her mother's fond-

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neſs, and her father's prudence. Her heart overflows with gratitude for the ſmalleſt ſervice. This warmth of her tenderneſs keeps her affections in more lively exerciſe than her judgment; it leads her to over-rate the merit of thoſe ſhe loves, and to eſtimate their excellencies, leſs by their own worth than by their kindneſs to her. She ſoon behaved to me with the moſt engaging frankneſs, and her innocent vivacity encouraged, in return, that affectionate freedom with which one treats a beloved ſiſter.

The other children are gay, lovely, intereſting, and ſweet tempered. Their ſeveral acquiſitions, for I deteſt the term *accompliſhments*, ſince it has been warped from the true meaning in which Milton uſed it, ſeem to be ſo many individual contributions brought in to enrich the common ſtock of domeſtic delight. Their talents are never put into exerciſe by artificial excitements. Habitual induſtry, quiet exertion, ſucceſſive employments, affectionate intercourſe, and gay and animated relaxation,

make up the round of their cheerful day.

I could not forbear admiring in this happy family the graceful union of piety with cheerfulneſs; ſtrictneſs of principle embelliſhed, but never relaxed by gaiety of manners; a gaiety not ſuch as requires turbulent pleaſures to ſtimulate it, but evidently the ſerene, yet animated, reſult of well regulated minds;—of minds actuated by a tenderneſs of conſcience, habitually alive to the perception of the ſmalleſt ſin, and kindling into holy gratitude at the ſmalleſt mercy.

I often called to mind that my father, in order to prevent my being deceived, and run away with by perſons who appeared lively at firſt ſight, had early accuſtomed me to diſcriminate carefully, whether it was not the *animal* only that was lively, and the man dull. I have found this caution of no ſmall uſe in my obſervations on the other ſex. I had frequently remarked, that the muſical and the dancing ladies, and thoſe who

who were moſt admired for modiſh attainments, had little *intellectual* gaiety. In numerous inſtances I found that the mind was the only part which was not kept in action; and no wonder, for it was the only part which had received no previous forming, no preparatory moulding.

When I mentioned this to Mr. Stanley, "the education," replied he, "which now prevails, is a Mahometan education. It conſiſts entirely in making woman an object of attraction. There are, however, a few reaſonable people left, who, while they retain the object, improve upon the plan. They too would make woman attractive; but it is by ſedulouſly labouring to make the underſtanding, the temper, the mind, and the manners of their daughters, as engaging as theſe Circaſſian parents endeavour to make the perſon."

CHAP. XV.

THE friendly rector frequently visited at Stanley Grove, and, for my father's sake, honoured me with his particular kindness. Dr. Barlow filled up all my ideas of a country clergyman of the higher class. There is an uniform consistency runs through his whole life and character, which often brings to my mind, allowing for the revolution in habits that almost two hundred years have necessarily produced, the incomparable *country parson* of the ingenious Mr. George Herbert*.

"I never

* See Herbert's Country Parson, under the heads of the "parson in his house, the parson praying, the parson preaching, the parson comforting, the parson's church, the parson catechising, the parson in mirth," &c. &c. The term parson has now indeed a vulgar and disrespectful sound, but in Herbert's time it

"I never saw *Zeal without Innovation,*" said Mr. Stanley, "more exemplified than in Dr. Barlow. His piety is as enlightened as it is sincere. No errors in religion escape him through ignorance of their existence, or through carelessness in their detection, or through inactivity in opposing them. He is too honest not to attack the prevailing evil, whatever shape it may assume; too correct to excite in the wise any fears that his zeal may mislead his judgment, and too upright to be afraid of the censures which active piety must ever have to encounter

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it was used in its true sense, *persona ecclesiæ*. I would recommend to those who have not seen it, this sketch of the ancient clerical life. As Mr. Herbert was a man of quality, he knew what became the more opulent of his function; as he was eminently pious, he practised all that he recommended. — "This appellation of parson," says Judge Blackstone, "however depreciated by clownish and familiar use, is the most legal, most beneficial, and most honourable title, which a parish priest can enjoy." *Vide Blackstone's Commentaries.*

from the worldly and the indifferent, from cold hearts and unfurnished heads.

"From his affectionate warmth, however, and his unremitting application arising from the vast importance he attaches to the worth of souls, the man of the world might honour him with the title of enthusiast; while his prudence, sobermindedness and regularity, would draw on him from the fanatic, the appellation of formalist. Though he is far from being 'content to *dwell* in decencies,' he is careful never to neglect them. He is a clergyman all the week as well as on Sunday; for he says, if he did not spend much of the intermediate time in pastoral visits, there could not be kept up that mutual intercourse of kindness which so much facilitates his own labours, and his people's improvement. They listen to him because they love him, and they understand him, because he has familiarized them by private discourse to the great truths which he delivers from the pulpit.

"Dr. Barlow has greatly diminished the growth

growth of innovation in his parishes, by attacking the innovator with his own weapons. Not indeed by stooping to the same disorderly practices, but by opposing an enlightened earnestness to an eccentric earnestness; a zeal *with* knowlege to a zeal *without* it. He is of opinion that activity does more good than invective, and that the latter is too often resorted to, because it is the cheaper substitute.

"His charity, however, is large, and his spirit truly catholic. He honours all his truly pious brethren, who are earnest in doing good, though they may differ from him as to the manner of doing it. Yet his candour never intrenches on his firmness; and while he will not dispute with others about shades of difference, he maintains his own opinions with the steadiness of one who has embraced them on the fullest conviction.

"He is a 'scholar, and being a good and a ripe one,' it sets him above aiming at the paltry reputation to be acquired by those false embellishments of style, those

difficult and uncommon words, and that laboured inverſion of ſentences, by which ſome injudicious clergymen make themſelves unacceptable to the higher, and unintelligible to the lower, and of courſe, the larger part of their audience. He always bears in mind that the common people are not fooliſh, they are only ignorant. To meet the one he preaches good ſenſe, to ſuit the other plain language. But while he ſeldom ſhoots over the heads of the uninformed, he never offends the judicious. He conſiders the advice of Polonius to his ſon, to be as applicable to preachers as to travellers—

Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.

In his pulpit he is no wrangling polemic, but a genuine bible Chriſtian, deeply impreſſed himſelf with the momentous truths he ſo earneſtly preſſes upon others. His mind is ſo imbued, ſo ſaturated, if I may hazard the expreſſion, with ſcriptural knowledge, that from that rich ſtore-houſe, he is ever ready to bring forth, *treaſures*

new

new and old, and to apply them wiſely, temperately, and ſeaſonably.

"Though he carefully inculcates univerſal holineſs in all his diſcourſes, yet his practical inſtructions are conſtantly deduced from thoſe fundamental principles of Chriſtianity which are the root and life and ſpirit of all goodneſs. Next to a ſolid piety, and a deep acquaintance with the Bible, he conſiders it of prime importance to a clergyman to be thoroughly acquainted with human nature in general and with the ſtate of his own pariſh in particular. The knowledge of both will alone preſerve him from preaching too perſonally ſo as to hurt, or too generally ſo as not to touch.

"He is careful not to hurry over the prayers in ſo cold, inattentive, and careleſs a manner, as to make the audience ſuſpect he is ſaving himſelf, that he may make a greater figure in delivering the ſermon. Inſtead of this, the devout, reverential, and impreſſive manner in which he pronounces the various parts of the Liturgy, beſt

beſt prepares his own heart, and the hearts of his people to receive benefit from his diſcourſe. His petitions are delivered with ſuch ſober fervour, his exhortations with ſuch humble dignity, his thankſgivings with ſuch holy animation, as carry the ſoul of the hearer along with him. When he aſcends the pulpit, he never throws the liturgical ſervice into the back ground by a long elaborate compoſition of his own, delivered with ſuperior force and emphaſis. And he pronounces the Lord's prayer with a ſolemnity which ſhows that he recollects its importance and its author.

"In preaching he is careful to be diſtinctly heard, even by his remoteſt auditors, and by conſtant attention to this important article, he has brought his voice, which was not ſtrong, to be particularly audible. He affixes ſo much importance to a diſtinct delivery, that he ſmilingly told me, he ſuſpected the grammatical definition of a ſubſtantive was originally meant for a clergyman, whoſe great object it was, if poſſible,

poſſible, *to be ſeen*, but indiſpenſably to be *heard, felt and underſtood.*

"His whole performance is diſtinguiſhed by a grave and majeſtic ſimplicity, as far removed from the careleſs reader of a common ſtory, as from the declamation of an actor. His hearers leave the church, not ſo much in raptures with the preacher, as affected with the truths he has delivered. He ſays he always finds he has done moſt good when he has been leaſt praiſed, and that he feels moſt humbled when he receives the warmeſt commendation, becauſe men generally extol moſt the ſermons which have probed them leaſt; whereas thoſe which really do good, being often ſuch as make them moſt uneaſy, are conſequently the leaſt likely to attract panegyric. 'They only bear true teſtimony to the excellence of a diſcourſe,' added he, 'not who commend the compoſition or the delivery, but who are led by it to examine their own hearts, to ſearch out its corruptions, and to reform their lives. Reformation is the flattery I covet.'

"He

"He is aware that the generality of hearers like to retire from a ſermon with the comfortable belief that little is to be done on *their* parts. Such hearers he always diſappoints, by leaving on their minds at the cloſe, ſome impreſſive precept deduced from, and growing out of, the preparatory doctrine. He does not preſs any one truth to the excluſion of all others. He propoſes no ſubtleties, but labours to excite ſerioufneſs, to alarm the careleſs, to quicken the ſupine, to confirm the doubting. He preſſes eternal things as things near at hand; as things in which every living man has an equal intereſt."

Mr. Stanley ſays, that "though Dr. Barlow was conſidered at Cambridge as a correct young man, who carefully avoided vice and even irregularity, yet being cheerful, and addicted to good ſociety, he had a diſpoſition to innocent conviviality, which might, unſuſpectedly, have led him into the errors he abhorred. He was ſtruck with a paſſage in a letter from Dr. John-

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ſon to a young man who had juſt taken orders, in which, among other wholeſome counſel, he adviſes him 'to acquire the courage to refuſe *ſometimes* invitations to dinner.' It is inconceivable what a degree of force and independence his mind acquired by the occaſional adoption of this ſingle hint. He is not only," continued Mr. Stanley, "the ſpiritual director, but the father, the counſellor, the arbitrator, and the friend of thoſe whom Providence has placed under his inſtruction.

"He is happy in an excellent wife, who, by bringing him a conſiderable fortune has greatly enlarged his power of doing good. But ſtill more eſſentially has ſhe increaſed his happineſs, and raiſed his character, by her piety and prudence. By the large part ſhe takes in his affairs, he is enabled to give himſelf wholly up to the duties of his profeſſion. She is as attentive to the bodies, as her huſband is to the ſouls of his people, and educates her own family as ſedulouſly as he inſtructs his pariſh.

"One

"One day when I had been congratulating Dr. Barlow on the excellence of his wife's character, the converſation fell, by a ſudden tranſition, on the celibacy of the Romiſh clergy. He ſmiled and ſaid, 'Let us miniſters of the Reformation be careful never to provoke the people to wiſh for the reſtoration of that part of popery. I often reflect how peculiarly incumbent it is on us, to ſelect ſuch partners as ſhall never cauſe our emancipation from the old reſtrictions to be regretted. And we ourſelves ought, by improving the character of our wives, to repay the debt we owe to the eccleſiaſtical laws of proteſtantiſm for the privilege of poſſeſſing them."

"Will it be thought too trifling to add, how carefully this valuable pair carry their conſiſtency into the moſt minute details of their family arrangements? Their daughters are no leſs patterns of decorum and modeſty in their dreſs and appearance, than in the more important parts of their conduct. The Doctor ſays, 'that the moſt diſtant

diſtant and inconſiderable appendages to the temple of God, ſhould have ſomething of purity and decency. Beſides,' added he, 'with what face could I cenſure impropriеties from the pulpit, if the appearance of my own family in the pew below were to ſet my precepts at defiance, by giving an example of extravagance and vanity to the pariſh, and thus by making the preacher ridiculous, make his expoſtulations worſe than ineffectual."

"So conſcientious a rector," added Mr. Stanley, "could not fail to be particularly careful in the choice of a curate; and a more humble, pious, diligent aſſiſtant than Mr. Jackſon could not eaſily be found. He is always a welcome gueſt at my table. But this valuable man, who was about as good a judge of the world as the great Hooker, made juſt ſuch another indiſcreet marriage. He was drawn in to chuſe his wife, the daughter of a poor tradeſman in the next town, becauſe he concluded that a woman bred in humble and active life,

would neceſſarily be humble and active herſelf. *Her* reaſon for accepting *him* was becauſe ſhe thought that as every clergyman was a *gentleman*, ſhe of courſe, as his wife, ſhould be a *gentlewoman*, and fit company for any body.

"'He inſtructs my pariſh admirably,' ſaid Dr. Barlow, 'but his own little family he cannot manage. His wife is continually reproaching him, that though he may know the way to heaven, he does not know how to puſh his way in the world. His daughter is the fineſt lady in the pariſh, and outdoes them all, not only in the extremity, but the immodeſty of the faſhion. It is her mother's great ambition that ſhe ſhould excel the Miſs Stanleys and my daughters in muſic, while her good father's linen betrays ſad marks of negligence. I once ventured to tell Mrs. Jackſon, that there was only one reaſon which could excuſe the education ſhe had given her daughter, which was that I preſumed ſhe intended to qualify her for getting her bread; and that if ſhe would

correct

correct the improprieties of the girl's dreſs, and get her inſtructed in uſeful knowledge, I would look out for a good ſituation for her. This rouſed her indignation. She refuſed my offer with ſcorn, ſaying, that when ſhe aſked my charity, ſhe would take my advice; and deſired I would remember that one clergyman's daughter was as good as another. I told her that there was indeed a ſenſe in which one clergyman was as good as another, becauſe the profeſſion dignified the loweſt of the order, if, like her huſband, he was a credit to that order. Yet ſtill there were gradations in the church as well as in the ſtate. But between the *wives* and *daughters* of the higher and lower clergy, there was the ſame diſtinction which riches and poverty have eſtabliſhed between thoſe of the higher and lower orders of the laity; and that rank and independence in the one caſe, confer the ſame outward ſuperiority with rank and independence in the other.

CHAP. XVI.

Among the viſitors at Stanley Grove, there was a family of ladies, who, though not particularly brilliant, were ſingularly engaging from their modeſty, gentleneſs, and good ſenſe. One day when they had juſt left us, Mr. Stanley obliged me with the following little relation: Mrs. Stanley and Lucilla only being preſent.

"Lady Aſton has been a widow almoſt ſeven years. On the death of Sir George, ſhe retired into this neighbourhood with her daughters, the eldeſt of whom is about the age of Lucilla. She herſelf had had a pious but a very narrow education. Her exceſſive grief for the loſs of her huſband augmented her natural love of retirement, which ſhe cultivated, not to the purpoſe of improvement, but to the indulgence of melancholy. Soon after ſhe ſettled here, we heard

heard how much good ſhe did, and, in how exemplary a manner ſhe lived, before we ſaw her. She was not very eaſy of acceſs even to us; and after we had made our way to her, we were the only viſitors ſhe admitted for a long time. We ſoon learnt to admire her deadneſs to the world, and her unaffected humility. Our eſteem for her increaſed with our cloſer intercourſe, which however enabled us alſo to obſerve ſome conſiderable miſtakes in her judgment, eſpecially in the mode in which ſhe was training up her daughters. Theſe errors we regretted, and with all poſſible tenderneſs ventured to point out to her. The girls were the prettieſt demure little nuns you ever ſaw, mute and timid, cheerleſs and inactive, but kind, good, and gentle.

"Their pious mother, who was naturally of a fearful and doubting mind, had had this penſive turn increaſed by ſeveral early domeſtic loſſes, which, even previous to Sir George's death, had contributed to fix

ſomething of a too tender and hopeleſs melancholy on her whole character.—There are two refuges for the afflicted; two diametrically oppoſite ways of getting out of ſorrow—religion and the world. Lady Aſton had wiſely choſen the former. But her ſcrupulous ſpirit had made the narrow way narrower than religion required. She read the Scriptures diligently, and ſhe prayed over them devoutly; but ſhe had no judicious friend to direct her in theſe important ſtudies. As your Mrs. Ranby attended only to the doctrines, and our friend Lady Belfield truſted indefinitely to the promiſes, ſo poor Lady Aſton's broken ſpirit was too excluſively carried to dwell on the threatenings; together with the rigid performance of thoſe duties which ſhe earneſtly hoped might enable her to eſcape them. This round of duty, of watchfulneſs, and prayer, ſhe invariably performed with almoſt the ſanctity of an apoſtle, but with a little too much of the ſcrupuloſity of an aſcetic. While too many are rejoicing with unfound-

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ed confidence in thoſe animating paſſages of ſcripture, which the whole tenor of their lives demonſtrates not to belong to them, ſhe trembled at thoſe denunciations which ſhe could not fairly apply to herſelf; and the promiſes from which ſhe might have derived reaſonable conſolation, ſhe overlooked as deſigned for others.

"Her piety, though ſincere, was a little tinctured with ſuperſtition. If any petty ſtrictneſs was omitted, ſhe tormented herſelf with cauſeleſs remorſe. If any little rule was broken, ſhe repaired the failure with treble diligence the following day; and laboured to retrieve her perplexed accounts with the comfortleſs anxiety of a perſon who is working out a heavy debt. I endeavoured to convince her, that an inferior duty which claſhed with one of a higher order, might be ſafely poſtponed at leaſt if not omitted.

"A diary has been found uſeful to many pious Chriſtians, as records of their ſins and of their mercies. But this poor lady

ſpent ſo much time in weighing the offences of one day againſt thoſe of another, that before the ſcruple was ſettled, the time for action was paſt. She brought herſelf into ſo much perplexity by reading over this journal of her infirmities, that her difficulties were augmented by the very means ſhe had employed to remove them; and her conſcience was diſturbed by the method ſhe had taken to quiet it. This plan, however, though diſtreſſing to a troubled mind, is wholeſome to one of a contrary caſt.

"*My* family, as you have ſeen, are rather exact in the diſtribution of their time, but we do not diſtreſs ourſelves at interruptions which are unavoidable: but *her* arrangements were carried on with a rigour which made her conſider the ſmalleſt deviation as a ſin that required ſevere repentance. Her alms were expiations, her ſelf-denials penances. She was rather a diſciple of the mortified Baptiſt, than of the merciful Redeemer. Her devotions were ſincere but diſcouraging. They conſiſted much in con-

contrition, but little in praiſe; much in ſorrow for ſin, but little in hope of its pardon. She did not ſufficiently caſt her care and confidence on the great propitiation. She firmly believed all that her Saviour had done and ſuffered, but ſhe had not the comfort of practically appropriating the ſacrifice. While ſhe was painfully working out her ſalvation with fear and trembling, ſhe indulged the moſt unfounded apprehenſions of the divine diſpleaſure. At Aſton Hall the Almighty was literally feared, but he was not glorified. It was the obedience of a ſlave, not the reverential affection of a child.

"When I ſaw her denying herſelf and her daughters the moſt innocent enjoyments, and ſuſpecting ſin in the moſt lawful indulgences, I took the liberty to tell her how little acceptable uncommanded auſterities and arbitrary impoſitions were to the God of mercies. I obſerved to her that the world, that human life, that our own ſins and weakneſſes, found us daily and hourly occaſions of exerciſing patience and ſelf-

denial; that life is not entirely made up of great evils or heavy trials, but that the perpetual recurrence of petty evils and ſmall trials is the ordinary and appointed exerciſe of the chriſtian graces. To bear with the failings of thoſe about us, with their infirmities, their bad judgment; their ill-breeding, their perverſe tempers; to endure neglect where we feel we have deſerved attention, and ingratitude where we expected thanks; to bear with the company of diſagreeable people, whom Providence has placed in our way, and whom he has perhaps provided on purpoſe for the trial of our virtue: theſe are the beſt exerciſe; and the better becauſe not choſen by ourſelves. To bear with vexations in buſineſs, with diſappointments in our expectations, with interruptions of our retirement, with folly, intruſion, diſturbance, in ſhort, with whatever oppoſes our will, and contradicts our humour;—this habitual acquieſcence appears to be more of the eſſence of ſelf-denial than any little rigours or inflictions of our

own

own impoſing. Theſe conſtant, inevitable, but inferior evils, properly improved, furniſh a good moral diſcipline, and might well in the days of ignorance have ſuperſeded pilgrimage and penance. It has this advantage too over the other, that it ſweetens the temper and promotes humility, while the former gives rigidneſs inſtead of ſtrength, and inflexibility inſtead of firmneſs."

"I have often thought," ſaid I, when Mr. Stanley made a pauſe, "that we are apt to miſtake our vocation by looking out of the way for occaſions to exerciſe great and rare virtues, and by ſtepping over thoſe ordinary ones which lie directly in the road before us. When we read, we fancy we could be martyrs, and when we come to act, we cannot even bear a provoking word."

Miſs Stanley looked pleaſed at my remark, and in a modeſt tone obſerved, that "in no one inſtance did we deceive ourſelves more than in fancying we could do great things well, which we were never likely to

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be called to do at all; while, if we were honeſt, we could not avoid owning how negligently we performed our own little appointed duties, and how ſeduloufly we avoided the petty inconveniencies which theſe duties involved."

"By kindneſs," reſumed Mr. Stanley, "we gradually gained Lady Aſton's confidence, and of that confidence we have availed ourſelves, to give ſomething of a new face to the family. Her daughters, good as they were dutiful, by living in a ſolitude unenlivened by books, and unvaried by improving company, had acquired a manner rather reſembling fearfulneſs than delicacy. Religious they were, but they had contracted gloomy views of religion. They conſidered it as ſomething that muſt be endured in order to avoid puniſhment, rather than as a principle of peace, and truſt, and comfort: as a taſk to be gone through rather than as a privilege to be enjoyed. They were tempted to conſider the Almighty as a hard maſter whom how-

ever they were reſolved to ſerve, rather than as a gracious father, who was not only loving, but LOVE in the abſtract. Their mother was afraid to encourage a cheerful look, leſt it might lead to levity; or a ſprightly thought, for fear it might have a wrong tendency. She forgot, or rather ſhe did not know, that young women were not formed for contemplative life. She forgot that in all our plans and operations we ſhould ſtill bear in mind that there are two worlds. As it is the fault of too many to leave the *next* out of their calculation, it was the error of Lady Aſton, in forming the minds of her children, to leave out *this*. She juſtly conſidered heaven as their great aim and end; but neglected to qualify them for the preſent temporal life, on the due uſe and employment of which ſo obviouſly depends the happineſs of that which is eternal.

"Her charities were very extenſive, but of theſe charities her ſweet daughters were not made the active diſpenſers, becauſe an old

ſer-

ſervant, who governed not only the family, but her lady alſo, choſe that office herſelf. Thus the bounty being made to flow in partial channels, the woman's relations and favourites almoſt entirely engroſſing it, it did little comparative good.

"With fair underſtandings the Miſs Aſtons had acquired very little knowledge: their mother's ſcrupulous mind found ſomething dangerous in every author, who did not profeſſedly write on religious ſubjects. If there were one exceptionable page in a book, otherwiſe valuable, inſtead of ſuppreſſing the page, ſhe ſuppreſſed the book. And indeed, my dear Charles, grieved am I to think how few authors of the more entertaining kind we *can* conſider as perfectly pure, and put without caution, reſtriction, or mutilation, into the hands of our daughters. I am, however, of opinion, that as they will not always have their parents for taſters, and as they will every where, even in the moſt ſelect libraries, meet with theſe mixed works, in which, though there

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is much to admire, yet there is ſomething to expunge, it is the ſafeſt way to accuſtom them early to hear read the moſt unexceptionable parts of theſe books. Read them yourſelf to them without any air of myſtery; tell them that what you omit is not worth reading, and then the omiſſions will not excite but ſtifle curioſity. The books to which I allude are thoſe where the principle is ſound and the tendency blameleſs, and where the few faults conſiſt rather in coarſeneſs than in corruption.

"But to return; ſhe fancied that theſe inexperienced creatures, who had never tried the world, and whoſe young imaginations had perhaps painted it in all the brilliant colours with which erring fancy gilds the ſcenes it has never beheld, and the pleaſures it has never tried, could renounce it as completely as herſelf, who had exhauſted what it has to give, and was weary of it. She thought they could live contentedly in their cloſets, without conſidering that ſhe had neglected to furniſh their minds with

that

that knowledge which may make the closet a place of enjoyment, by supplying the intervals of devotional with entertaining reading.

"We carried Lucilla and Phœbe to visit them: I believe she was a little afraid of their gay countenances. I talked to her of the necessity of literature to inform her daughters, and of pleasures to enliven them. The term pleasure alarmed her still more than that of literature. 'What pleasures were allowed to religious people? She would make her daughters as happy as she dared without offending her Maker.' I quoted the devout but liberal Hooker, who exhorts us not to regard the Almighty as a captious sophist, but as a merciful Father.

"During this conversation we were sitting under the fine spreading oak on my lawn, in front of that rich bank of flowers which you so much admire. It was a lovely evening in the end of June, the setting sun was all mild radiance, the sky all azure, the air all fragrance. The birds were in full song.

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The children ſitting on the graſs before us, were weaving chaplets of wild flowers.

It looked like nature in the world's firſt ſpring.

"My heart was touched with joy and gratitude. 'Look, madam,' ſaid I, 'at the bountiful proviſion which a beneficent father makes, not only for the neceſſities, but for the pleaſures of his children;

——not content
With every food of life to nouriſh man,
He makes all nature beauty to his eye,
And muſic to his ear.

"'Theſe flowers are of ſo little apparent uſe, that it might be thought profuſeneſs in any economy ſhort of that which is divine to gratify us at once with ſuch forms, and ſuch hues, and ſuch fragrance. It is a gratification not neceſſary, yet exquiſite, which lies ſomewhere between the pleaſures of ſenſe and intellect, and in a meaſure partakes of both. It elevates while it exhilarates, and lifts the ſoul from the gift to the giver. God has not left his goodneſs to be

inferred

inferred from abſtract ſpeculation, from the concluſions of reaſon, from deduction and argument; we not only collect it from obſervation, but we have palpable evidences of his bounty, we feel it with our ſenſes. Were God a hard maſter, might he not withhold theſe ſuperfluities of goodneſs? Do you think he makes ſuch rich proviſion for us, that we ſhould ſhut our eyes and cloſe our ears to them? Does he preſent ſuch gifts with one hand, and hold in the other a ſtern interdict of touch not, taſte not, handle not? And can you believe he is leſs munificent in the economy of grace, than in that of nature? Do you imagine that he provides ſuch abundant ſupplies for our appetites and ſenſes here without providing more ſubſtantial pleaſures for our future enjoyment? Is not what we are a prelude to what we hope for, a pledge of what we may expect? A ſpecimen of larger, higher, richer bounty, an encouraging cluſter from the land of promiſe? If from his works we turn to his word, we ſhall find the ſame inexhauſtible

exhauſtible goodneſs exerciſed to ſtill nobler purpoſes. Muſt we not hope then, even by analogy, that he has in ſtore bleſſings exalted in their nature, and eternal in their duration, for all thoſe who love and ſerve him in the goſpel of his ſon?"

We now got on faſt. She was delighted with my wife, and grew leſs and leſs afraid of my girls. I believe, however, that we ſhould have made a quicker progreſs in gaining her confidence if we had looked leſs happy. I ſuggeſted to her to endeavour to raiſe the tone of her daughters' piety, to make their habits leſs monaſtic, their tempers more cheerful, their virtues more active; to render their lives more uſeful, by making them the immediate inſtruments of her charity; to take them out of themſelves, and teach them to compare their factitious diſtreſſes with real ſubſtantial miſery, and to make them feel grateful for the power and the privilege of relieving it.

"As Dr. Barlow has two pariſhes which

join, and we had pre-occupied the ground in our own, I adviſed them to found a ſchool in the next, for the inſtruction of the young, and a friendly ſociety for the aged of their own ſex. We prevailed on them to be themſelves not the nominal but the active patroneſſes; to take the meaſure of all the wants and all the merit of their immediate neighbourhood; to do every thing under the advice and ſuperintendance of Dr. Barlow, and to make him their guide, philoſopher, and friend." By adopting this plan, they now ſee the poverty of which they only uſed to hear, and know perſonally the dependants whom they protect.

"Dr. Barlow took infinite pains to correct Lady Aſton's views of religion. 'Let your notions of God,' ſaid he, 'be founded, not on your own gloomy apprehenſions, and viſionary imaginations, but on what is revealed in his word; elſe the very intenſeneſs of your feelings, the very ſincerity of your devotion, may betray you into

into enthuſiaſm, into error, into ſuperſtition, into deſpair. Spiritual notions which are not grounded on ſcriptural truth, and directed and guarded by a cloſe adherence to it, miſlead tender hearts and warm imaginations. But while you reſt on the ſure unperverted foundation of the word of God, and pray for his ſpirit to aſſiſt you in the uſe of his word, you will have little cauſe to dread that you ſhall fear him too much, or ſerve him too well. I earneſtly exhort you,' continued he, 'not to take the meaſure of your ſpiritual ſtate from circumſtances which have nothing to do with it. Be not diſmayed at an incidental depreſſion which may depend on the ſtate of your health, or your ſpirits, or your affairs. Look not for ſenſible communications. Do not conſider rapturous feelings as any criterion of the favour of your Maker, nor the abſence of them as any indication of his diſpleaſure. An encreaſing deſire to know him more, and ſerve him better; an encreaſing deſire to do, and to ſuffer his whole

will; a growing reſignation to his providential diſpenſations is a much ſurer, a much more unequivocal teſt."

"I next," continued Mr. Stanley, "carried our worthy curate Mr. Jackſon to viſit her, and propoſed that ſhe ſhould engage him to ſpend a few hours every week with the young ladies. I recommended that after he had read with them a portion of ſcripture, of which he would give them a ſound and plain expoſition, he ſhould convince them he had not the worſt taſte for being religious, by reading with them ſome books of general inſtruction, hiſtory, travels, and polite literature. This would imbue their minds with uſeful knowledge, form their taſte, and fill up profitably and pleaſantly that time which now lay heavy on their hands; and, without intrenching on any of their duties, would qualify them to diſcharge them more cheerfully.

"I next ſuggeſted that they ſhould ſtudy gardening; and that they ſhould put themſelves under the tuition of Lucilla, who

who is become the little Repton of the valley. To add to the intereſt, I requeſted that a freſh piece of ground might be given them, that they might not only exerciſe their taſte, but be animated with ſeeing the compleat effect of their own exertions; as a creation of their own would be likely to afford them more amuſement, than improving on the labours of another.

"I had ſoon the gratification of ſeeing my little Carmelites, who uſed when they walked in the garden to look as if they came to dig a daily portion of their own graves, now enjoying it, embelliſhing it, and delighted by watching its progreſs; and their excellent mother, who, like Spencer's Deſpair, uſed to look 'as if ſhe never dined,' now enjoying the company of her ſelect friends. The mother is become almoſt cheerful, and the daughters almoſt gay. Their dormant faculties are awakened. Time is no longer a burden but a bleſſing; the day is too ſhort for their duties, which are performed with alacrity ſince they have

been converted into pleaſures.—You will believe I did not hazard all thoſe terrible innovations as rapidly as I recount them, but gradually, as they were able to bear it.

"This happy change in themſelves has had the happieſt conſequences. Their friends had conceived the ſtrongeſt prejudices againſt religion, from the gloomy garb in which they had ſeen it arrayed at Aſton Hall. The uncle, who was alſo the guardian, had threatened to remove the girls before they were quite moped to death; the young baronet was actually forbidden to come home at the holidays; but now the uncle is quite reconciled to *them*, and almoſt to *religion*. He has reſumed his fondneſs for the daughters; and their brother, a fine youth at Cambridge, is happy in ſpending his vacations with his family, to whom he is become tenderly attached. He has had his own principles and character much raiſed by the converſation and example of Dr. Barlow, who contrives to be at Aſton Hall as much as poſſible when Sir George

is

is there. He is daily expected to make his mother a viſit, when I ſhall recommend him to your particular notice and acquaintance."

Lucilla bluſhing, ſaid, ſhe thought her father had too excluſively recommended the brother to my friendſhip; ſhe would venture to ſay the ſiſters were equally worthy of my regard, adding in an affectionate tone, "they are every thing that is amiable and kind. The more you know them, Sir, the more you will admire them; for their good qualities are kept back, by the beſt quality of all, their modeſty." This candid and liberal praiſe did not ſink the fair eulogiſt herſelf in my eſteem.

CHAP. XVII.

I HAD now been above three weeks at the Grove. Ever ſince my arrival I had contracted the habit of pouring out my heart to Mr. and Mrs. Stanley, with grateful affection and filial confidence. I ſtill continued to do it on all ſubjects except one.

The more I ſaw of Lucilla, the more difficult I found it to reſiſt her numberleſs attractions. I could not perſuade myſelf that either prudence or duty demanded that I ſhould guard my heart againſt ſuch a combination of amiable virtues and gentle graces; virtues and graces, which, as I obſerved before, my mind had long been combining as a delightful idea, and which I now ſaw realized in a form more engaging, than even my own imagination had allowed itſelf to picture.

I did not feel courage ſufficient to riſk the happineſs I actually enjoyed, by aſpiring too

too ſuddenly to a happineſs more perfect. I dared not yet avow to the parents, or the daughter, feelings which, my fears told me, might poſſibly be diſcouraged, and which, if diſcouraged, would at once daſh to the ground a fabric of felicity that my heart, not my fancy had erected, and which my taſte, my judgment, and my principles equally approved, and delighted to contemplate.

The great critic of antiquity, in his Treatiſe on the Drama, obſerves that the introduction of a new perſon is of the next importance to a new incident. Whether the introduction of two interlocutors is equal in importance to two incidents, Ariſtotle has forgotten to eſtabliſh. This dramatic rule was illuſtrated by the arrival of Sir John and Lady Belfield, who, though not new to the reader or the writer, were new at Stanley Grove.

The early friendſhip of the two gentlemen had ſuffered little diminution from abſence, though their intercourſe had been much

much interrupted; Sir John, who was a few years younger than his friend, ſince his marriage, having lived as entirely in town, as Mr. Stanley had done in the country. Mrs. Stanley had indeed ſeen Lady Belfield a few times in Cavendiſh Square, but her Ladyſhip had never before been introduced to the other inhabitants of the Grove.

The gueſts were received with cordial affection, and eaſily fell into the family habits, which they did not wiſh to interrupt, but from the obſervation of which they hoped to improve their own. They were charmed with the intereſting variety of characters in the lovely young family, who in return were delighted with the politeneſs, kindneſs and cheerfulneſs of their father's gueſts.

Shall I avow my own meanneſs? Cordially as I loved the Belfields, I am afraid I ſaw them arrive with a ſlight tincture of jealouſy. They would, I thought, by enlarging the family circle, throw me at a far-

a farther diſtance from the being whom I wiſhed to contemplate nearly. They would, by dividing her attention, diminiſh my proportion. I had been hitherto the ſole gueſt, I was now to be one of ſeveral. This was the firſt diſcovery I made that love is a narrower of the heart. I tried to ſubdue the ungenerous feeling, and to meet my valuable friends with a warmth adequate to that which they ſo kindly manifeſted. I found that a wrong feeling at which one has virtue enough left to bluſh, is ſeldom laſting, and ſhame ſoon expelled it.

The firſt day was paſſed in mutual enquiries and mutual communications. Lady Belfield told me that the amiable Fanny, after having wept over the grave of her mother, was removed to the houſe of the benevolent clergyman, who had kindly promiſed her an aſylum, till Lady Belfield's return to town, when it was intended that ſhe ſhould be received into her family; that worthy man and his wife, having taken on themſelves a full reſponſibility for her

character

character and diſpoſition; and generouſly promiſed that they would exert themſelves to advance her progreſs in knowledge during the interval. Lady Belfield added, that every enquiry reſpecting Fanny, whom we muſt now call Miſs Stokes, had been attended with the moſt ſatisfactory reſult, her principles being as unqueſtionable as her talents.

After dinner, I obſerved that whenever the door opened, Lady Belfield's eye was always turned towards it, in expectation of ſeeing the children. Her affectionate heart felt diſappointed on finding that they did not appear, and ſhe could not forbear whiſpering me, who ſat next her, "that ſhe was afraid the piety of our good friends was a little tinctured with ſeverity. For her part, ſhe ſaw no reaſon why religion ſhould diminiſh one's affection for one's children, and rob them of their innocent pleaſures." I aſſured her gravely I thought ſo too: but forebore telling her how totally inappoſite her application was to Mr. and Mrs. Stanley. She ſeemed glad to find me

of

of her opinion, and gave up all hope of ſeeing the "little melancholy recluſes," as ſhe called them, "unleſs," ſhe ſaid laughing, "ſhe might be permitted to look at them through the grate of their cells." I ſmiled, but did not undeceive her, and affected to join in her compaſſion. When we went to attend the ladies in the drawing room, I was delighted to find Lady Belfield ſitting on a low ſtool, the whole gay groupe at play round her. A bluſh mixed itſelf with her good-natured ſmile, as we interchanged a ſignificant look. She was queſtioning one of the elder ones, while the youngeſt ſat on her lap ſinging. Sir John entered with that kindneſs and good humour ſo natural to him, into the ſports of the others, who, though wild with health and ſpirits, were always gentle and docile. He had a thouſand pleaſant things to entertain them with. He too, it ſeems, had not been without his miſgivings.

"Are not theſe poor miſerable recluſes?" whiſpered I malicioufly to her ladyſhip, "and

"and are not theſe rueful looks proof poſitive that religion diminiſhes our affection for our children? and is it not abridging their innocent pleaſures, to give them their full range in a freſh airy apartment inſtead of cramming them into an eating room, of which the air is made almoſt fœtid by the fumes of the dinner and a crowded table? and is it not better that they ſhould ſpoil the pleaſure of the company, though the miſchief they do is bought by the ſacrifice of their own liberty?" "I make my *amende*," ſaid ſhe. "I never will be ſo forward again to ſuſpect piety of ill-nature." "So far from it, Caroline," ſaid Sir John, "that we will adopt the practice we were ſo forward to blame; and I ſhall not do it," ſaid he, "more from regard to the company, than to the children, who I am ſure will be gainers in point of enjoyment; liberty I perceive is to them poſitive pleaſure, and paramount to any which our falſe epicureiſm can contrive for them."

"Well, Charles," ſaid Sir John, as ſoon

as,

as he saw me alone, "now tell us about this Lucilla, this paragon, this nonpareil of Dr. Barlow's. Tell me what she is? or rather what she is not?"

"First," replied I, "I will, as you desire, define her by negatives—she is *not* a professed beauty, she is *not* a professed genius, she is *not* a professed philosopher, she is *not* a professed wit, she is *not* a professed any thing; and I thank my stars, she is *not* an artist!" "Bravo, Charles, now as to what she is!" "She is," replied I, "from nature—a woman, gentle, feeling, animated, modest.—She is, by education elegant, informed, enlightened.—She is, from religion, pious, humble, candid, charitable."

"What a refreshment it will be," said Sir John, "to see a girl of fine sense, more cultivated than accomplished,—the creature, not of fidlers and dancing masters, but of nature, of books, and of good company. If there is the same mixture of spirit and delicacy in her character, that there is of

softness

ſoftneſs and animation in her countenance, ſhe is a dangerous girl, Charles."

"She certainly does," ſaid I, "poſſeſs the eſſential charm of beauty where it exiſts; and the moſt effectual ſubſtitute for it, where it does not; the power of prepoſſeſſing the beholder by her look and manner, in favour of her underſtanding and temper."

This prepoſſeſſion, I afterwards found confirmed, not only by her own ſhare in the converſation, but by its effect on myſelf; I always feel that our intercourſe unfolds not only her powers but my own. In converſing with ſuch a woman, I am apt to fancy that I have more underſtanding, becauſe her animating preſence brings it more into exerciſe.

After breakfaſt, next day, the converſation happened to turn on the indiſpenſible importance of unbounded confidence to the happineſs of married perſons. Mr. Stanley expreſſed his regret, that though it was one of the grand ingredients of domeſtic

comfort, yet it was sometimes unavoidably prevented by an unhappy inequality of mind between the parties, by violence, or imprudence, or imbecility on one side, which almost compelled the other to a degree of reserve, as incompatible with the design of the union, as with the frankness of the individual.

"We have had an instance among our own friends," replied Sir John, "of this evil being produced, not by any of the faults to which you have adverted, but by an excess of misapplied sensibility, in two persons of near equality as to merit, and in both of whom the utmost purity of mind and exactness of conduct rendered all concealment superfluous. Our worthy friends Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton married from motives of affection, and with an high opinion of each other's merit, which their long and intimate connection has rather contributed to exalt than to lower; and yet, now at the end of seven years, they are only beginning to be happy. They contrived to make each

other and themſelves as uncomfortable by an exceſs of tenderneſs, as ſome married pairs are rendered by the want of it. A miſtaken ſenſibility has intrenched, not only on their comfort, but on their ſincerity. Their reſolution never to give each other pain, has led them to live in a conſtant ſtate of petty concealment. They are neither of them remarkably healthy, and to hide from each other every little indiſpoſition, has kept up a continual vigilance to conceal illneſs on the one part, and to detect it on the other, till it became a trial of ſkill which could make the other moſt unhappy; each ſuffering much more by ſuſpicion when there was no occaſion for it, than they could have done by the acknowledgment of ſlight complaints, when they actually exiſted.

"This valuable pair, after ſeven years apprenticeſhip to a petty martyrdom, have at laſt found out, that it is better to ſubmit to the inevitable ills of life, cheerfully and in concert, and to comfort each other under them cordially, than alternately to ſuffer and

and inflict the pain of pepetual disingenuousness. They have at last discovered that uninterrupted prosperity is not the lot of man. Each is happier now with knowing that the other is sometimes sick, than they used to be with suspecting they were always so. The physician is now no longer secretly sent for to one, when the other is known to be from home. The apothecary is at last allowed to walk boldly up the public stair-case fearless of detection.

"These amiable persons have at length attained all that was wanting to their felicity, that of each believing the other to be well, when they *say* they are so. They have found out that unreserved communication is the lawful commerce of conjugal affection, and that all concealment is contraband."

"Surely," said I, when Sir John had done speaking, "it is a false compliment to the objects of our affection, if, for the sake of sparing them a transient uneasiness, we rob them of the comfort to which they are entitled of mitigating our suffering by par-

taking it. All diſſimulation is diſloyalty to love. Beſides, it appears to me, to be an introduction to wider evils, and I ſhould fear both for the woman I loved, and for myſelf, that if once we allowed ourſelves concealment in one point, where we thought the motive excuſed us, we might learn to adopt it in others, where the principle was more evidently wrong."

"Beſides," replied Mr. Stanley, "it argues a lamentable ignorance of human life, to ſet out with an expectation of health without interruption, and of happineſs without alloy. When young perſons marry with the faireſt proſpects, they ſhould never forget that infirmity is inſeparably bound up with their very nature, and that in bearing one another's burthens, they fulfil one of the higheſt duties of the union."

CHAP

CHAP. VIII.

AFTER ſupper, when only the family party were preſent, the converſation turned on the unhappy effects of miſguided paſſion. Mrs. Stanley lamented that novels with a very few admirable exceptions, had done infinite miſchief by ſo completely eſtabliſhing the omnipotence of love, that the young reader was almoſt ſyſtematically taught an unreſiſting ſubmiſſion to a feeling, becauſe the feeling was commonly repreſented as irreſiſtible.

"Young ladies," ſaid Sir John, ſmiling, "in their blind ſubmiſſion to this imaginary omnipotence, are apt to be neceſſarians. When they *fall* in love, as it is ſo juſtly called, they then obey their *fate*; but in their ſtout oppoſition to prudence and duty, they moſt manfully exert their *free will*; ſo that they want nothing but

the *knowledge abſolute*, of the miſeries attendant on an indiſcreet attachment, completely to exemplify the occupation aſſigned by Milton to a claſs of beings to whom it would not be gallant to reſemble young ladies."

Mrs. Stanley continued to aſſert, that ill-placed affection only became invincible, becauſe its ſuppoſed invincibility had been firſt erected into a principle. She then adverted to the power of religion in ſubduing the paſſions, that of love among the reſt.

I ventured to aſk Lucilla, who was ſitting next me, (a happineſs which by ſome means or other I generally contrived to enjoy,) what were her ſentiments on this point? With a little confuſion, ſhe ſaid, "To conquer an ill-placed attachment, I conceive may be effected by motives inferior to religion. Reaſon, the humbling conviction of having made an unworthy choice, for I will not reſort to ſo bad a motive as pride, may eaſily accompliſh it. But to conquer a well-founded affection, a juſtifiable attachment; I ſhould imagine, requires

requires the powerful principle of Chriſtian piety; and what cannot that effect?" She ſtopped and bluſhed, as if fearing ſhe had ſaid too much.

Lady Belfield obſerved, that ſhe believed a virtuous attachment might poſſibly be ſubdued by the principle Miſs Stanley had mentioned; yet ſhe doubted if it were in the power of religion itſelf to enable the heart to conquer averſion, much leſs to eſtabliſh affection for an object for whom diſlike had been entertained.

"I believe," ſaid Mr. Stanley, "the example is rare, and the exertion difficult; but that which is difficult to us, is not impoſſible to Him who has the hearts of all men in his hand. And I am happy to reſolve Lady Belfield's doubt by a caſe in point.

"You cannot, Sir John, have forgotten our old London acquaintance Carlton?" "No," replied he, "nor can I ever forget what I have ſince heard of his ungenerous treatment of that moſt amiable woman, his

wife. I ſuppoſe he has long ago broken her heart."

"You know," reſumed Mr. Stanley, "they married not only without any inclination on either ſide, but on her part with ſomething more than indifference, with a preference for another perſon. *She* married through an implicit obedience to her mother's will, which ſhe had never in any inſtance oppoſed; *He*, becauſe his father had threatened to diſinherit him if he married any other woman; for as they were diſtant relations, there was no other way of ſecuring the eſtate in the family.

"What a motive for an union ſo ſacred and ſo indiſſoluble!" exclaimed I, with an ardour which raiſed a ſmile in the whole party. I aſked pardon for my involuntary interruption, and Mr. Stanley proceeded.

"She had long entertained a partiality for a moſt deſerving young clergyman, much her inferior in rank and fortune. But though her high ſenſe of filial duty led her to ſacrifice this innocent inclination, and

though

though she resolved never to see him again, and had even prevailed on him to quit the country, and settle in a distant place, yet Carlton was ungenerous and inconsistent enough to be jealous of her without loving her. He was guilty of great irregularities, while Mrs. Carlton set about acquitting herself of the duties of a wife, with the most meek and humble patience, burying her sorrows in her own bosom, and not allowing herself even the consolation of complaining.

"Among the many reasons for his dislike, her piety was the principal. He said religion was of no use but to disqualify people for the business of life; that it taught them to make a merit of despising their duties, and hating their relations; and that pride, ill-humour, opposition, and contempt for the rest of the world, were the meat and drink of all those who pretended to religion.

"At first she nearly sunk under his unkindness; her health declined, and her spirits failed. In this distress she applied

to

to the only ſure refuge of the unhappy, and took comfort in the conſideration that her trials were appointed by a merciful Father, to detach her from a world which ſhe might have loved too fondly, had it not been thus ſtripped of its delights.

"When Mrs. Stanley, who was her confidential friend, expreſſed the tendereſt ſympathy in her ſufferings, ſhe meekly replied, 'remember who are they whoſe robes are waſhed white in the kingdom of glory, *it is they who come out of great tribulation.* I endeavour to ſtrengthen my faith with a view of what the beſt Chriſtians have ſuffered, and my hope with meditating on the ſhortneſs of all ſuffering. I will confeſs my weakneſs,' added ſhe: 'of the various motives to patience under the ills of life, which the Bible preſents, though my reaſon and religion acknowledge them all, there is not one which comes home ſo powerfully to my feelings as this,—*the time is ſhort.*'

"Another time Mrs. Stanley, who had heard of ſome recent irregularities of Carl-

ton,

ton, called upon her, and lamenting the ſolitude to which ſhe was often left for days together, adviſed her to have a female friend in the houſe, that her mind might not be left to prey upon itſelf by living ſo much alone. She thanked her for the kind ſuggeſtion, but ſaid ſhe felt it was wiſer and better not to have a confidential friend always at hand, 'for of what ſubject ſhould we talk,' ſaid ſhe, 'but of my huſband's faults? Ought I to allow myſelf in ſuch a practice? It would lead me to indulge a habit of complaint which I am labouring to ſubdue. The compaſſion of my friend would only ſharpen my feelings, which I wiſh to blunt. Giving vent to a flame only makes it rage the more; if ſuppreſſing cannot ſubdue it, at leaſt the conſciouſneſs that I am doing my duty will enable me to ſupport it. When we feel,' added ſhe, 'that we are *doing* wrong the opening our heart may ſtrengthen our virtue; but when we are *ſuffering* wrong the mind demands another ſort of ſtrength;

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it wants higher ſupport than friendſhip has to impart. It pours out its ſorrows in prayer with fuller confidence, knowing that he who ſees can ſuſtain; that he who hears will recompence; that he will judge, not our weakneſs, but our efforts to conquer it; not our ſucceſs, but our endeavours; with him endeavour is victory.'

"The grace I moſt want,' added ſhe, 'is humility. A partial friend, in order to ſupport my ſpirits, would flatter my conduct: gratified with her ſoothing, I ſhould, perhaps, not ſo entirely caſt myſelf for comfort on God. Contented with human praiſe I might reſt in it. Beſides having endured the ſmart, I would not willingly endure it in vain. We know who has ſaid, 'if you ſuffer with me, 'you ſhall alſo reign with me.' It is not, however, to mere ſuffering that the promiſe is addreſſed, but to ſuffering for his ſake, and in his ſpirit.' Then turning to the Bible which lay before her, and pointing to the ſublime paſſage of St. Paul, which ſhe had

had juſt been reading 'our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;' 'Pray,' ſaid ſhe, 'read this in connection with the next verſe, which is not always done. *When* is it that it works for us this weight of glory? *Only* 'while we are looking at the things which are not ſeen.' Do admire the beauty of this poſition, and how the good is weighed againſt the evil, like two ſcales differently filled; the affliction is light, and but for a moment; the glory is a *weight*, and it is for *ever*. 'Tis a feather againſt lead, a grain of ſand againſt the univerſe, a moment againſt eternity. Oh, how the ſcale which contains this world's light trouble kicks the beam, when weighed againſt the glory which ſhall be revealed.'

"At the end of two years ſhe had a little girl: this opened to her a new ſcene of duties, and a freſh ſource of conſolation. Her religion proved itſelf to be of the right ſtamp, by making her temper ſtill more

ſweet, and diffuſing the happieſt effects through her whole character and converſation. When her huſband had ſtaid out late or even all night, ſhe never reproached him. When he was at home, ſhe received his friends with as much civility as if ſhe had liked them. He found that his houſe was conducted with the utmoſt prudence, and that while ſhe maintained his credit at his table, her perſonal expences were almoſt nothing: indeed ſelf ſeemed nearly annihilated in her. He ſometimes felt diſappointed, becauſe he had no cauſe of complaint, and was angry that he had nothing to condemn.

"As he has a very fine underſtanding he was the more provoked, becauſe he could not help ſeeing that her blameleſs conduct put him continually in the wrong. All this puzzled him. He never ſuſpected there was a principle, out of which ſuch conſequences could grow, and was ready to attribute to inſenſibility, that patience which nothing ſhort of Chriſtian piety could have inſpired.

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He had conceived of religion, as a viſionary ſyſtem of words and phraſes, and concluded that from ſo unſubſtantial a theory, it would be a folly to look for practical effects.

"Sometimes, when he ſaw her nurſing his child, of whom he was very fond, he was almoſt tempted to admire the mother, who is a moſt pleaſing figure; and now and then, when his heart was thus ſoftened for a moment, he would aſk himſelf what reaſonable ground of objection there was either to her mind or perſon?

"Mrs. Carlton, knowing that his affairs muſt neceſſarily be embarraſſed by the extraordinary expences he had incurred, when the ſteward brought her uſual year's allowance ſhe refuſed to take more than half, and ordered him to employ the remainder on his maſter's account. The faithful old man was ready to weep, and could not forbear ſaying, 'Madam, you could not do more for a kind huſband. Beſides, it is but a drop of water in the ocean.' 'That drop,' ſaid ſhe, 'it is my duty to contribute.'

When

When the ſteward communicated this to Carlton, he was deeply affected, refuſed to take the money, and was again driven to reſort to the wonderful principle, from which ſuch right but difficult actions could proceed."

Here I interrupted Mr. Stanley. "I am quite of the ſteward's opinion," ſaid I. "That a woman ſhould do this and much more for the man who loved her, and whom ſhe loved, is quite intelligible to every being who has a heart. But for a cruel, unfeeling tyrant! I do not comprehend it. What ſay you, Miſs Stanley?

"Under the circumſtance you ſuppoſe," ſaid ſhe, bluſhing, "I think the woman would have no ſhadow of merit; her conduct would be a mere gratification, an entire indulgence of her own feelings. The triumph of affection would have been cheap; Mrs. Carlton's was the triumph of religion; of a principle which could ſubdue an attachment to a worthy object, and act with ſuch generoſity towards an unworthy one."

Mr.

Mr. Stanley went on. "Mrs. Carlton frequently ſat up late, reading ſuch books as might qualify her for the education of her child, but always retired before ſhe had reaſon to expect Mr. Carlton, leſt he might conſtrue it into upbraiding. One night, as he was not expected to come home at all, ſhe ſat later than uſual, and had indulged herſelf with taking her child to paſs the night in her bed. With her uſual earneſtneſs ſhe knelt down and offered up her devotions by her bed-ſide, and in a manner particularly ſolemn and affecting, prayed for her huſband. Her heart was deeply touched, and ſhe dwelt on theſe petitions in a ſtrain peculiarly fervent. She prayed for his welfare in both worlds, and earneſtly implored that ſhe might be made the humble inſtrument of his happineſs. She meekly acknowledged her own many offences; of his ſhe ſaid nothing.

"Thinking herſelf ſecure from interruption, her petitions were uttered aloud; her voice often faultering, and her eyes

ſtreaming with tears. Little did ſhe ſuſpect that the object of her prayers was within hearing of them. He had returned home unexpectedly, and coming ſoftly into the room, heard her pious aſpirations. He was inexpreſſibly affected. He wept and ſighed bitterly. The light from the candles on the table fell on the blooming face of his ſleeping infant, and on that of his weeping wife. It was too much for him; but he had not the virtuous courage to give way to his feelings. He had not the generoſity to come forward and expreſs the admiration he felt. He withdrew unperceived, and paſſed the remainder of the night in great perturbation of ſpirit. Shame, remorſe, and confuſion, raiſed ſuch a conflict in his mind, as prevented him from cloſing his eyes: while ſhe ſlept in quiet, and awoke in peace.

"The next morning, during a very ſhort interview, he behaved to her with a kindneſs which ſhe had never before experienced. He had not reſolution to breakfaſt with her, but promiſed, with affection in his words

words and manner, to return to dinner. The truth was he never quitted home, but wandered about his woods to compose and strengthen his mind. This self-examination was the first he had practised; its effects were salutary.

"A day or two previous to this, they had dined at our house. He had always been much addicted to the pleasures of the table. He expressed high approbation of a particular dish, and mentioned again when he got home how much he liked it. The next morning Mrs. Carlton wrote to Lucilla to beg the receipt for making this ragout; and this day when he returned from his solitary ramble and "compunctious visitings," the favourite dish most exquisitely dressed, was produced at his dinner. He thanked her for this obliging attention, and turning to the butler, directed him to tell the cook that no dish was ever so well dressed. Mrs. Carlton blushed when the honest butler said, 'Sir, it was my mistress dressed it with

her own hands, because she knew your honour was fond of it.'

"Tears of gratitude rushed into Carlton's eyes, and tears of joy overflowed those of the old domestic, when his master, rising from the table, tenderly embraced his wife, and declared he was unworthy of such a treasure. 'I have been guilty of a public wrong, Johnson,' said he to his servant, 'and my reparation shall be as public. I can never deserve her, but my life shall be spent in endeavouring to do so.'

"The little girl was brought in, and her presence seemed to cement this new formed union. An augmented cheerfulness on the part of Mrs. Carlton, invited an increased tenderness on that of her husband. He began every day to discover new excellencies in his wife, which he readily acknowledged to herself, and to the world. The conviction of her worth had gradually been producing esteem, esteem now ripened into affection, and his affection for his wife was mingled

mingled with a blind ſort of admiration of that piety which had produced ſuch effects. He now began to think home the pleaſanteſt place, and his wife the pleaſanteſt companion.

"A gentle cenſure from him on the exceſſive frugality of her dreſs, mixed with admiration of the purity of its motive, was an intimation to her to be more elegant. He happened to admire a gown worn by a lady whom they had viſited. She not only ſent for the ſame materials, but had it made by the ſame pattern. A little attention of which he felt the delicacy.

"He not only ſaw, but in no long time acknowledged, that a religion which produced ſuch admirable effects, could not be ſo miſchievous a principle as he had ſuppoſed, nor could it be an inert principle. Her prudence has accompliſhed what her piety began. She always watched the turn of his eye, to ſee how far ſhe might venture, and changed the diſcourſe when the look was not encouraging. She never tired him

with lectures, never obtruded ſerious diſcourſe unſeaſonably, nor prolonged it improperly. His early love of reading, which had for ſome years given way to more turbulent pleaſures, he has reſumed; and frequently inſiſts, that the books he reads to her ſhall be of her own chuſing. In this choice ſhe exerciſes the niceſt diſcretion, ſelecting ſuch as may gently lead his mind to higher purſuits, but which at the ſame time are ſo elegantly written as not to diſguſt his taſte. In all this Mrs. Stanley is her friend and counſellor.

"While Mrs. Carlton is advancing her huſband's reliſh for books of piety, he is forming hers to polite literature. She herſelf often propoſes an amuſing book, that he may not ſuſpect her of a wiſh to abridge his innocent gratifications; and by this complaiſance ſhe gains more than ſhe loſes, for, not to be outdone in generoſity, he often propoſes ſome pious one in return. Thus their mutual ſacrifices are mutual benefits. She has found out that he has a highly

highly cultivated underſtanding, and he has diſcovered, that ſhe has a mind remarkably ſuſceptible of cultivation. He has by degrees dropt moſt of his former aſſociates, and has entirely renounced the diverſions into which they led him. He is become a frequent and welcome viſitor here. His conduct is uniformly reſpectable, and I look forward with hope to his becoming even a ſhining character. There is, however, a pertinacity, I may ſay a ſincerity, in his temper, which ſomewhat keeps him back. He will never adopt any principle without the moſt complete conviction of his own mind; nor profeſs any truth of which he himſelf does not actually feel the force."

Lady Belfield, after thanking Mr. Stanley for his intereſting little narrative, earneſtly requeſted that Sir John would renew his acquaintance with Mr. Carlton, that ſhe herſelf might be enabled to profit by ſuch an affecting example of the power of genuine religion, as his wife exhibited; confeſſing that one ſuch living inſtance would weigh

more with her than an hundred arguments. Mrs. Stanley obligingly promiſed to invite them to dinner the firſt leiſure day.

Mr. Stanley now informed us that Sir George Aſton was arrived from Cambridge, on a viſit to his mother and ſiſters; that he was a youth of great promiſe, whom he begged to introduce to us as a young man in whoſe welfare he took a lively concern, and on the right formation of whoſe character much would depend, as he had a large eſtate, and the family intereſt in the county would give him a very conſiderable influence: to this influence it was, therefore, of great importance to give a right direction. We next morning took a ride to Aſton Hall, and I commenced an acquaintance with the engaging young baronet, which I doubt not, from what I ſaw and heard, will hereafter ripen into friendſhip.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

THE good rector joined the party at dinner. The conversation afterwards happened to turn on the value of human opinion, and Sir John Belfield made the hackneyed observation, that the desire of obtaining it should never be discouraged, it being highly useful as a motive of action.

"Yes," said Dr. Barlow, "it certainly has its uses in a world the affairs of which must be chiefly carried on by worldly men; a world which is itself governed by low motives. But human applause is not a Christian principle of action; nay, it is so adverse to Christianity, that our Saviour himself assigns it as a powerful cause of men's not believing, or at least not confessing him, *because they loved the praise of men.* The eager desire of fame is a sort of separation line between Paganism and

and Chriſtianity. The ancient philoſophers have left us many ſhining examples of moderation in earthly things, and of the contempt of riches. So far the light of reaſon, and a noble ſelf-denial carried them; and many a Chriſtian may bluſh at theſe inſtances of their ſuperiority; but of an indifference to fame, of a deadneſs to human applauſe, except as founded on loftineſs of ſpirit, diſdain of their judges, and ſelf-ſufficient pride, I do not recollect any inſtance."

"And yet," ſaid Sir John, "I remember Seneca ſays in one of his epiſtles, that no man expreſſes ſuch a reſpect and devotion to virtue, as he who forfeits the *repute* of being a good man, that he may not forfeit the *conſciouſneſs* of being ſuch."

"They might," replied Mr. Stanley, "incidentally expreſs ſome ſuch ſentiment in a well-turned period, to give antitheſis to an expreſſion, or weight to an apophthegm; they might declaim againſt it in a fit of diſappointment, in the burſt of indignation excited by a recent loſs of popularity; but I queſ-

I queſtion if they ever once acted upon it. I queſtion if Marius himſelf, ſitting amidſt the ruins of Carthage, actually felt it. Seldom, if ever, does it ſeem to have been inculcated as a principle, or enforced as a rule of action: nor could it—it was "againſt the canon law of their foundation."

Sir John. "Yet a good man ſtruggling with adverſity is, I think, repreſented by one of their authors, as an object worthy of the attention of the gods.

Stanley. "Yes—but the divine approbation alone was never propoſed as the ſtandard of right, or the reward of actions, except by divine revelation."

"Nothing ſeems more difficult," ſaid I, "to ſettle than the ſtandard of right. Every man has a ſtandard of his own, which he conſiders as of univerſal application. One makes his own taſtes, deſires, and appetites, his rule of right; another the example of certain individuals, fallible like himſelf: a third, and indeed the generality, the maxims, habits, and manners of the faſhionable part of the world."

Sir

Sir John. "But since it is so difficult to discriminate between allowable indulgence, and criminal conformity, the life of a conscientious man, if he be not constitutionally temperate, or habitually firm, must be poisoned with solicitude, and perpetually racked with the fear of exceeding his limits."

Stanley. "My dear Belfield, the peace and security of a Christian, we well know, are not left to depend on constitutional temperance, or habitual firmness. These are, as the young Numidian says,

Perfections that are placed in bones and nerves.

There is a higher and surer way to prevent the solicitude, which is, by correcting the principle; to get the heart set right; to be jealous over ourselves; to be careful never to venture to the edge of our lawful limits; in short, and that is the only infallible standard, to live in the conscientious practice of measuring all we say, and do, and think, by the unerring rule of God's word."

Sir John. "The impossibility of reaching

ing the perfection which that rule requires, ſometimes, diſcourages well-meaning men as if the attempt were hopeleſs."

Dr. Barlow. "That is, Sir, becauſe they take up with a kind of hearſay Chriſtianity. Its reputed pains and penalties drive them off from enquiring for themſelves. They reſt on the ſurface. If they would go deeper, they would ſee that the ſpirit which dictated the ſcripture is a ſpirit of power, as well as a ſpirit of promiſe. All that he requires us to do, he enables us to perform. He does not preſcribe rules without furniſhing us with arms."

In anſwer to ſome further remarks of Sir John, who ſpoke with due abhorrence of any inſtance of actual vice, but who ſeemed to have no juſt idea of its root and principle, Dr. Barlow obſerved; "While every one agrees in reprobating wicked actions, few, comparatively, are aware of the natural and habitual evil which lurks in the heart. To this the bible particularly directs our attention. In deſcribing a bad character,

it

it does not say that his *actions* are flagitious, but that 'God is not in all his *thoughts*.' This is the description of a thoroughly worldly man. Those who are given up completely to the world, to its maxims, its principles, its cares, or its pleasures, cannot entertain thoughts of God. And to be unmindful of his providence, to be regardless of his presence, to be insensible to his mercies, must be nearly as offensive to Him as to deny his existence. Excessive dissipation, a supreme love of money, or an entire devotedness to ambition, drinks up that spirit, swallows up that affection, exhausts that vigour, starves that zeal, with which a Christian should devote himself to serve his Maker."

"Pray observe," continued Dr. Barlow, "that I am not speaking of avowed profligates, but of decent characters; men who, while they are pursuing with keen intenseness the great objects of their attachment, do not deride or even totally neglect religious observances; yet think they do much and well, by affording some odd scraps of refuse time

time to a few weary prayers, and ſleepy thoughts, from a mind worn down with engagements of pleaſure, or projects of accumulation, or ſchemes of ambition. In all theſe ſeveral purſuits, there may be nothing which, to the groſs perceptions of the world, would appear to be moral turpitude. The pleaſure may not be profligacy, the wealth ſo cheriſhed may not have been fraudulently obtained; the ambition, in human eſtimation, may not be diſhonourable; but an alienation from God, an indifference to eternal things, a ſpirit incompatible with the ſpirit of the goſpel, will be found at the bottom of all theſe reſtleſs purſuits."

"I am entirely of your opinion, Doctor," ſaid Mr. Stanley; "it is taking up with ſomething ſhort of real Chriſtianity; it is an apoſtacy from the doctrines of the bible, it is the ſubſtitution of a ſpurious and popular religion, for that which was revealed from heaven; it is a departure from the faith once delivered to the ſaints, that has ſo fatally ſunk our morality, and given countenance

tenance to that low ſtandard of practical virtue which prevails. If we lower the principle, if we obſcure the light, if we reject the influence, if we ſully the purity, if we abridge the ſtrictneſs of the divine law, there will remain no aſcending power in the ſoul, no ſtirring ſpirit, no quickening aſpiration after perfection, no ſtretching forward after that holineſs to which the beatific viſion is ſpecifically promiſed. It is vain to expect that the practice will riſe higher than the principle which inſpires it; that the habits will be ſuperior to the motives which govern them."

Dr. Barlow. "Selfiſhneſs, ſecurity, and ſenſuality, are predicted by our Saviour, as the character of the laſt times. In alluding to the antediluvian world, and the cauſe of its deſtruction, eating, drinking, and marrying could not be named in the goſpel as things cenſurable in themſelves, they being neceſſary to the very exiſtence of that world, which the abuſe of them was tending to deſtroy. Our Saviour does not deſcribe criminality

criminality by the exceſs but by the ſpirit of the act. He ſpeaks of eating not gluttony, of drinking not intoxication, of marriage not licentious intercourſe. This ſeems a plain intimation, that carrying on the tranſactions of the world in the ſpirit of the world, and that habitual deadneſs to the concerns of eternity, in beings ſo alive to the pleaſures or the intereſts of the preſent moment, do not indicate a ſtate of ſafety, even where groſs acts of vice may be rare."

Mr. Stanley. "It is not by a few, or even by many inſtances of exceſſive wickedneſs, that the moral ſtate of a country is to be judged, but by a general averſeneſs and indifference to *real* religion. A few examples of glaring impiety may furniſh more ſubject for declamation, but are not near ſo deadly a ſymptom. It is no new remark, that more men are undone by an exceſſive indulgence in things permitted, than by the commiſſion of avowed ſins."

Sir John. "How happy are thoſe, who, by their faith and piety, are delivered from theſe difficulties!"

Stanley. "My dear Belfield, where are thoſe privileged beings? It is one ſad proof of human infirmity, that the beſt men have continually theſe things to ſtruggle with. What makes the difference is, that thoſe whom we call good men ſtruggle on to the end, while the others, not ſeeing the danger, do not ſtruggle at all."

"Chriſtians," ſaid Dr. Barlow, "who would ſtrictly keep within the bounds preſcribed by their religion, ſhould imitate the ancient Romans, who carefully watched that their god Terminus, who defined their limits, ſhould never recede; the firſt ſtep of his retreat, they ſaid, would be the deſtruction of their ſecurity."

Sir John. "But Doctor, pray what remedy do you recommend againſt this natural, I had almoſt ſaid this invincible propenſity to over-value the world? I do not mean a propenſity merely to over-rate its

pleaſures

pleaſures and its honours, but a diſpoſition to yield to its dominion over the mind, to indulge a too earneſt deſire of ſtanding well with it, to cheriſh a too anxious regard for its good opinion?"

Dr. Barlow. "The knowledge of the diſeaſe ſhould precede the application of the remedy. Human applauſe is by a worldly man reckoned not only among the luxuries of life, but among articles of the firſt neceſſity. An undue deſire to obtain it, has certainly its foundation in vanity, and it is one of our grand errors to reckon vanity a trivial fault. An over-eſtimation of character, and an anxious wiſh to conciliate all ſuffrages, is an infirmity from which even worthy men are not exempt; nay, it is a weakneſs from which, if they are not governed by a ſtrict religious principle, worthy men are in moſt danger. Reputation being in itſelf ſo very deſirable a good, thoſe who actually poſſeſs it, and in ſome ſenſe deſerve to poſſeſs it, are apt to make it their ſtandard, and to reſt in it, as their ſupreme aim and end."

Sir John. "You have expoſed the latent principle, it remains that you ſuggeſt its cure."

Dr. Barlow. "I believe the moſt effectual remedy would be, to excite in the mind frequent thoughts of our divine Redeemer, and of *his* eſtimate of that world on which we ſo fondly ſet our affections, and whoſe approbation we are too apt to make the chief object of our ambition."

Sir John. "I allow it to have been neceſſary, that Chriſt in the great end which he had to accompliſh, ſhould have been poor, and neglected, and contemned, and that he ſhould have trampled on the great things of this world, human applauſe among the reſt; but I do not conceive that this obligation extends to his followers, nor that we are called upon to partake the poverty which he preferred, or to renounce the wealth and grandeur which he ſet at nought, nor to imitate him in making himſelf of no reputation."

Dr. Barlow. "We are not indeed called to reſemble him in his external circumſtances.

ſtances. It is not our bounden duty to be neceſſarily expoſed to the ſame contempt; nor are we obliged to embrace the ſame ignominy. Yet it ſeems a natural conſequence of our Chriſtian profeſſion, that the things which he deſpiſed, we ſhould not venerate; the vanities he trampled on, we ſhould not admire; the world which he cenſured, we ought not to idolize; the eaſe which he renounced, we ſhould not rate too highly; the fame which he ſet at nought, we ought not anxiouſly to covet. Surely the followers of him who was "deſpiſed and rejected of men" ſhould not ſeek their higheſt gratification from the flattery and applauſe of men. The truth is, in all diſcourſes on this ſubject, we are compelled continually to revert to the obſervation, that chriſtianity is a religion of the *heart*. And though we are not called upon to partake the poverty and meanneſs of his ſituation, yet the precept is clear and direct, reſpecting the temper by which we ſhould be governed. "Let the ſame *mind* be in you which was alſo in

Chriſt Jeſus." If, therefore, we happen to poſſeſs that wealth and grandeur which he diſdained, we ſhould *poſſeſs them as though we poſſeſſed them not.* We have a fair and liberal permiſſion to uſe them as his gift, and to his glory, but not to erect them into the ſupreme objects of our attachment. In the ſame manner, in every other point it is ſtill the ſpirit of the act, the temper of the mind, to which we are to look. For inſtance, I do not think that I am obliged to ſhew my faith by ſacrificing my ſon, nor my obedience by ſelling all that I have to give to the poor; but I think I am bound, by the ſpirit of theſe two powerful commands, to practiſe a cheerful acquieſcence in the whole will of God, in ſuffering and renouncing, as well as in doing, when I know what is really his will."

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

THE pleaſant reflections excited by the intereſting converſation of the evening, were cruelly interrupted by my faithful Edwards. "Sir," ſaid he, when he came to attend me, "do you know that all the talk of the Hall to-night at ſupper was, that Miſs Stanley is going to be married to young Lord Staunton? He is a couſin of Mrs. Carlton's, and Mr. Stanley's coachman brought home the news from thence yeſterday. I could not get at the very truth, becauſe Mrs. Comfit was out of the way, but all the ſervants agree, that though he is a lord, and rich, and handſome, he is not half good enough for her. Indeed, Sir, they ſay he is no better than he ſhould be."

I was thunderſtruck at this intelligence.

It was a trial I had not ſuſpected. "Does he viſit here then, Edwards," ſaid I, "for I have neither ſeen nor heard of him." "No, Sir," ſaid he, "but Miſs meets him at Mr. Carlton's." This ſhocked me beyond expreſſion. Lucilla meet a man at another houſe! Lucilla carry on a clandeſtine engagement! Can Mrs. Carlton be capable of conniving at it! Yet if it were not clandeſtine, why ſhould he not viſit at the Grove?

Theſe tormenting reflections kept me awake the whole night. To acquit Lucilla Edwards's ſtory made difficult; to condemn her, my heart found was impoſſible. One moment I blamed my own fooliſh timidity, which had kept me back from making any propoſal, and the next, I was glad that the delay would enable me to ſift the truth, and probe her character. "If I do not find conſiſtency here," ſaid I, "I ſhall renounce all confidence in human virtue."

I aroſe early and went to indulge my meditations in the garden. I ſaw Mr. Stanley

ley ſitting under the favourite oak. I was inſtantly tempted to go and open my heart to him, but ſeeing a book in his hand, I feared to interrupt him; and was turning into another walk, till I had acquired more compoſure. He called after me, and invited me to ſit down.

How violent were my fluctuations! How inconſiſtent were my feelings! How much at variance was my reaſon with my heart! The man on earth with whom I wiſhed to confer, invited me to a conference. With a mind under the dominion of a paſſion which I was eager to declare, yet agitated with an uncertainty which I had as much reaſon to fear might be painfully as pleaſantly removed; I ſtood doubtful whether to ſeize or to decline the occaſion which thus preſented itſelf to me. A moment's reflection however convinced me that the opportunity was too inviting to be neglected. My impatience for an eclairciſſement on Lord Staunton's ſubject was too powerful to be any longer reſiſted.

At

At length with the moſt unfeigned diffidence, and a heſitation which I feared would render my words unintelligible, I ventured to expreſs my tender admiration of Miſs Stanley, and implored permiſſion to addreſs her.

My application did not ſeem to ſurpriſe him. He only gravely ſaid, "we will talk of this ſome future day." This cold and laconic reply inſtantly ſunk my ſpirits. I was ſhocked and viſibly confuſed. "It is too late," ſaid I to myſelf. "Happy Lord Staunton!" He ſaw my diſtreſs, and taking my hand with the utmoſt kindneſs of voice and manner, ſaid, "My dear young friend, content yourſelf for the preſent with the aſſurance of my entire eſteem and affection. This is a very early declaration. You are ſcarcely acquainted with Lucilla; you do not yet know," added he, ſmiling, "half her faults."

"Only tell me, my dear Sir," ſaid I, a little re-aſſured, and graſping his hand, "that when you know all mine you will not

not reject me. Only tell me that you feel no repugnance—that you have no other views—that Miss Stanley has no other"—here I stopt, my voice failed—the excess of my emotion prevented me from finishing my sentence. He encouragingly said, "I know not that Lucilla has any attachment. For myself, I have no views hostile to your wishes. You have a double interest in my heart. You are endeared to me by your personal merit, and by my tender friendship for your beloved father. But be not impetuous. Form no sudden resolution. Try to assure yourself of my daughter's affection, before you ask it of her. Remain here another month as my welcome guest, as the son of my friend. Take that month to examine your own heart, and to endeavour to obtain an interest in her's; we will then resume the subject."

"But, my dear Sir," said I, "is not Lord Staunton—" "Set your heart at rest," said he. "Though we are both a little aristocratic in our political principles,

yet when the competition is for the happineſs of life, and the intereſts of virtue, both Lucilla and her father think with Dumont, that

A lord
Oppoſed againſt a man is but a man.

So ſaying he quitted me; but with a benignity in his countenance and manner that infuſed not only conſolation, but joy into my heart. My ſpirits were at once elated. To be allowed to think of Lucilla! To be permitted to attach myſelf to her! To be ſure her heart was not engaged! To be invited to remain a month longer under the ſame roof with her—to ſee her—to hear her—to talk to her—all this was a happineſs ſo great that I did not allow myſelf to repine, becauſe it was not all I had wiſhed to obtain.

I met Mrs. Stanley ſoon after. I perceived by her illuminated countenance, that my propoſal had been already communicated to her. I ventured to take her hand, and with the moſt reſpectful earneſtneſs in-

intreated her friendſhip—her good offices. "I dare not truſt myſelf with you juſt now," ſaid ſhe with an affectionate ſmile; "Mr. Stanley will think I abet rebellion, if through my encouragement you ſhould violate your engagements with him. But," added ſhe kindly, preſſing my hand; "you need not be much afraid of *me*. Mr. Stanley's ſentiments on this point, as on all others, are exactly my own. We have but one heart and one mind, and that heart and mind are, not unfavourable to your wiſhes." With a tear in her eyes and affection in her looks, ſhe tore herſelf away, evidently afraid of giving way to her feelings.

I did not think myſelf bound by any point of honour to conceal the ſtate of my heart from Sir John Belfield, who with his lady joined me ſoon after in the garden. I was aſtoniſhed to find that my paſſion for Miſs Stanley was no ſecret to either of them. Their penetration had left me nothing to diſcloſe. Sir John however looked ſerious,

ſerious, and affected an air of myſtery which a little alarmed me. "I own," ſaid he, "there is ſome danger of your ſucceſs." I eagerly enquired what he thought I had to fear? "You have every thing to fear," replied he, in a tone of grave irony, "which a man not four and twenty, of an honourable family, with a clear eſtate of four thouſand a year, a perſon that all the ladies admire, a mind which all the men eſteem, and a temper which endears you to men, women, and children, *can* fear from a little country girl, whoſe heart is as free as a bird, and who, if I may judge by her ſmiles and bluſhes whenever you are talking to her, would have no mortal objection to ſing in the ſame cage with you."

"It will be a ſad dull novel, however," ſaid Lady Belfield—"all is likely to go on ſo ſmoothly that we ſhall flag for want of incident. No difficulties, nor adventures to heighten the intereſt. No cruel ſtep-dame, no tyrant father, no capricious miſtreſs, no moated caſtle, no intriguing confidant, no trea-

treacherous ſpy, no formidable rival, not ſo much as a duel or even a challenge, I fear, to give variety to the monotonous ſcene."

I mentioned Edwards's report reſpecting Lord Staunton, and owned how much it had diſturbed me. "That he admires her," ſaid Lady Belfield, "is notorious. That his addreſſes have not been encouraged, I have alſo heard, but not from the family. As to Lucilla, ſhe is the laſt girl that would ever inſinuate even to me, to whom ſhe is ſo unreſerved, that ſhe had rejected ſo great an offer. I have heard her expreſs herſelf with an indignation, foreign to her general mildneſs, againſt women who are guilty of this faſhionable, this diſhonourable indelicacy."

"Well, but Charles," ſaid Sir John, "you muſt poſitively aſſume a little dejection, to diverſify the buſineſs. It will give intereſt to your countenance, and pathos to your manner, and tenderneſs to your accent. And you muſt forget all attentions, and neglect all civilities. And you muſt

muſt appear abſent, and *diſtrait* and *reveur*; eſpecially while your fate hangs in ſome ſuſpenſe. And you muſt read Petrarch, and repeat Tibullus, and write ſonnets. And when you are ſpoken to, you muſt not liſten. And you muſt wander in the grove by moonſhine, and talk to the Oreads, and the Dryads, and the Naiads—Oh no, unfortunately, I am afraid there are no Naiads within hearing. You muſt make the woods vocal with the name of Lucilla; luckily 'tis ſuch a poetical name that Echo won't be aſhamed to repeat it. I have gone through it all, Charles, and know every high-way and bye-way in the map of love. I will, however, be ſerious for one moment, and tell you for your comfort, that though at your age I was full as much in for it as you are now, yet after ten years union, Lady Belfield has enabled me to declare

How much the wife is dearer than the bride."

A tear gliſtened in her ſoft eyes, at this tender compliment.

Juſt

Juſt at that moment, Lucilla happened to croſs the lawn at a diſtance. At ſight of her, I could not, as I pointed to her, forbear exclaiming, in the words of Sir John's favorite poet,

> There doth beauty dwell,
> There moſt conſpicuous, ev'n in outward ſhape,
> Where dawns the high expreſſion of a MIND.

"This is very fine," ſaid Sir John, ſarcaſtically, "I admire all you young enthuſiaſtic philoſophers, with your intellectual refinement. You pretend to be captivated only with *mind*. I obſerve, however, that previous to your raptures, you always take care to get this mind lodged in a fair and youthful form. This mental beauty is always prudently enſhrined in ſome elegant corporeal frame, before it is worſhipped. I ſhould be glad to ſee ſome of theſe intellectual adorers in love with the mind of an old or ugly woman. I never heard any of you fall into extacies in deſcanting on the mind of your grandmother." After

ſome further irony, they left me to indulge my meditations, in the nature of which a ſingle hour had made ſo pleaſant a revolution.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

THE converſation of two men bred at the ſame ſchool or college when they happen to meet afterwards, is commonly unintereſting, not to ſay tireſome, to a third perſon, as involving local circumſtances in which he has no concern. But this was not always the caſe ſince the meeting of my two friends. Something was generally to be gained by their communications even on theſe unpromiſing topics.

At breakfaſt Mr. Stanley ſaid, "Sir John, you will ſee here at dinner to-morrow our old college acquaintance, Ned Tyrrel. Though he does not commonly live at the family houſe in this neighbourhood, but at a little place he has in Buckinghamſhire, he comes among us periodically to receive his rents. He always invites himſelf, for his ſociety is not the moſt engaging."

"I heard," replied Sir John, "that he became a notorious profligate after he left Cambridge, though I have loſt ſight of him ever ſince we parted there. But I was glad to learn lately that he is become quite a reformed man."

"He is ſo far reformed," replied Mr. Stanley, "that he is no longer groſsly licentious. But in laying down the vices of youth, he has taken up ſucceſſively thoſe which he thought better ſuited to the ſucceſſive ſtages of his progreſs. As he withdrew himſelf from his looſe habits and connexions, ambition became his governing paſſion; he courted public favour, thirſted for place and diſtinction, and laboured by certain obliquities and ſome little ſacrifices of principle, to obtain promotion. Finding it did not anſwer, and all his hopes failing, he now rails at ambition, wonders men will wound their conſciences and renounce their peace for vain applauſe and 'the bubble reputation.' His ſole delight at preſent, I hear, is in amaſſing money

money and reading controverſial divinity. Avarice has ſupplanted ambition, juſt as ambition expelled profligacy.

"In the interval in which he was paſſing from one of theſe ſtages to the other, in a very uneaſy ſtate of mind, he dropped in by accident where a famous irregular preacher was diſſeminating his Antinomian doctrines. Caught by his vehement but coarſe eloquence, and captivated by an alluring doctrine which promiſed much while it required little, he adopted the ſoothing but fallacious tenet. It is true, I hear he is become a more reſpectable man in his conduct, but I doubt, though I have not lately ſeen him, if his preſent ſtate may not be rather worſe than his former ones.

"In the two previous ſtages, he was diſturbed and diſſatisfied. Here he has taken up his reſt. Out of this ſtrong hold, it is not probable that any ſubſequent vice will ever drive him, or true religion draw him. He ſometimes attends public worſhip, but as he thinks no part of it but the ſermon of

much value, it is only when he likes the preacher. He has little notion of the reſpect due to eſtabliſhed inſtitutions, and does not heartily like any precompoſed forms of prayer, not even our incomparable Liturgy. He reads ſuch religious books only as tend to eſtabliſh his own opinions, and talks and diſputes loudly on certain doctrinal points. But an accumulating Chriſtian, and a Chriſtian, who, for the purpoſe of accumulation, is ſaid to be uncharitable, and even ſomewhat oppreſſive, is a paradox which I cannot ſolve, and an anomaly which I cannot comprehend. Covetouſneſs is, as I ſaid, a more creditable vice than Ned's former ones, but for that very reaſon more dangerous.

"From this ſober vice," ſaid I, "proceeded the blackeſt crime ever perpetrated by human wickedneſs; for it does not appear that Judas, in his direful treaſon, was inſtigated by malice. It is obſervable, that when our Saviour names this ſin it is with an emphatical warning, as knowing its miſchief

chief to be greater becauſe its ſcandal was leſs. Not contented with a ſingle caution, he doubles his exhortation. "*Take heed*, and *beware* of covetouſneſs."

After ſome remarks of Sir John, which I do not recollect, Mr. Stanley ſaid, "I did not intend making a philippic againſt covetouſneſs, a ſin to which I believe no one here is addicted. Let us not, however, plume ourſelves in not being guilty of a vice, to which, as we have no natural bias, ſo in not committing it, we reſiſt no temptation. What I meant to inſiſt on was, that exchanging a turbulent for a quiet ſin, or a ſcandalous for an orderly one, is not reformation; or, if you will allow me the ſtrong word, is not converſion."

Mr. Tyrrel, according to his appointment, came to dinner, and brought with him his nephew, Mr. Edward Tyrrel, whom he had lately entered at the univerſity, with a deſign to prepare him for holy orders. He was a well-diſpoſed young man, but his previous education was ſaid to have

been very much neglected, and he was rather deficient in the neceſſary learning. Mr. Stanley had heard that Tyrrel had two reaſons for breeding him to the church. In the firſt place, he fancied it was the cheapeſt profeſſion, and in the next he had laboured to infuſe into him ſome particular opinions of his own, which he wiſhed to diſſeminate through his nephew. Sir George Aſton having accidentally called, he was prevailed on to ſtay, and Dr. Barlow was of the party.

Mr. Tyrrel, by his obſervations, ſoon enabled us to diſcover that his religion had altered nothing but his language. He ſeemed evidently more fond of controverſy than of truth, and the whole turn of his converſation indicated that he derived his religious ſecurity rather from the adoption of a party, than from the implantation of a new principle. "His diſcourſe is altered," ſaid Mr. Stanley to me afterwards, "but I greatly fear his heart and affections remain unchanged."

Mr.

Mr. Stanley contrived for the ſake of his two academical gueſts, particularly young Tyrrel, to divert the converſation to the ſubject of learning, more eſpecially clerical learning.

In anſwer to a remark of mine on the ſatisfaction I had felt in ſeeing ſuch a happy union of learning and piety in two clergymen who had lately dined at the Grove, Mr. Stanley ſaid, "Literature is an excellent thing, when it is not the beſt thing a man has. It can ſurely be no offence to our Maker to cultivate carefully his higheſt natural gift, our reaſon. In pious men it is peculiarly important, as the neglect of ſuch cultivation, in certain individuals, has led to much error in religion, and given much juſt offence to the irreligious, who are very ſharp ſighted to the faults of pious characters. I, therefore, truly rejoice to ſee a higher tone of literature now prevailing, eſpecially in ſo many of our pious young divines; the deficiency of learning in ſome of their immediate predeceſſors, having

ſerved

ſerved to bring not only themſelves, but religion alſo into contempt, eſpecially with men who have only learning."

Tyrrel. "I ſay nothing againſt the neceſſity of learning in a lawyer, becauſe it may help him to lead a judge, and to miſlead a jury; nor in a phyſician, becauſe it may advance his credit by enabling him to conceal the deficiencies of his art; nor in a private gentleman, becauſe it may keep him out of worſe miſchief. But I ſee no uſe of learning in the clergy. There is my friend Dr. Barlow. I would willingly give up all his learning, if he would go a little deeper into the doctrines he profeſſes to preach."

Mr. Stanley. "I ſhould indeed think Dr. Barlow's various knowledge of little value, did he exhibit the ſmalleſt deficiency in the great points to which you allude. But when I am perſuaded that his learning is ſo far from detracting from his piety, that it enables him to render it more extenſively uſeful, I cannot wiſh him diſpoſſeſſed of

that

that knowledge which adorns his religion without diminishing its good effects."

Tyrrel. "You will allow that those first great publishers of Christianity, the Apostles, had none of this vain learning."

Stanley. "It is frequently pleaded by the despisers of learning, that the Apostles were illiterate. The fact is too notorious and the answer too obvious to require to be dwelt upon. But it is unfortunately adduced to illustrate a position to which it can never apply, the vindication of an unlettered clergy. It is a hacknied remark, but not the less true for being old, that the wisdom of God chose to accomplish the first promulgation of the gospel by illiterate men, to prove that the work was his own, and that its success depended not on the instruments employed, but on the divinity of the truth itself. But if the Almighty chose to establish his religion by miracles, he chuses to carry it on by means. And he no more sends an ignorant peasant or fisherman to instruct men in christianity now, than he appointed a Socrates or a Plato to be

be its publiſhers at firſt. As, however, there is a great difference in the ſituations, ſo there may be a proportionable difference allowed in the attainments of the clergy. I do not ſay it is neceſſary for every village curate to be a profound ſcholar, but as he may not always remain in obſcurity, there is no neceſſity for his being a contemptible one."

Sir John. "What has been ſaid of thoſe who affect to deſpiſe birth has been applied alſo to thoſe who decry learning; neither is ever undervalued except by men who are deſtitute of them: and it is worthy of obſervation, that, as literature and religion both ſunk together in the dark ages, ſo both emerged at the ſame auſpicious æra."

Mr. Stanley finding that Dr. Barlow was not forward to embark in a ſubject which he conſidered as rather perſonal, ſaid, "Is it preſumptuous to obſerve, that though the Apoſtles were unlettered men, yet thoſe inſtruments who were to be employed in ſervices ſingularly difficult, the Almighty condeſcended partly to fit for their peculiar work

work by great human attainments. The apoſtle of the Gentiles was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; and Moſes, who was deſtined to the high office of a great legiſlator, was inſtructed in all the wiſdom of the moſt learned nation then exiſting. The Jewiſh lawgiver, though under the guidance of inſpiration itſelf, did not fill his ſtation the worſe for this preparatory inſtitution. To how important a uſe the apoſtle converted *his* erudition, we may infer from his conduct in the moſt learned and poliſhed aſſembly in the world. He did not unneceſſarily exaſperate the polite Athenians by coarſe upbraiding, or illiterate clamour, but he attacked them on their own ground. With what diſcriminating wiſdom, with what powerful reaſoning did he unfold to them 'that God whom they ignorantly worſhipped!' With what temper, with what elegance did he expoſe their ſhallow theology! Had he been as unacquainted with *their* religion as they were with *his*, he had wanted the appropriate ground on which

to

to build his inſtruction. He ſeized on the inſcription of their own pagan altar, as a text from which to preach the doctrines of Chriſtianity. From his knowledge of their errors, he was enabled to advance the cauſe of truth. He made their poetry, which he quoted, and their mythology which he would not have been able to explode, if he had not underſtood it, a theſis from which to deduce the doctrine of the Reſurrection. Thus ſoftening their prejudices, and letting them ſee the infinite ſuperiority of that Chriſtianity which he enforced, to the mere learning and mental cultivation on which they ſo highly valued themſelves. By the ſame ſober diſcretion, accurate reaſoning, and graceful elegance, he afterwards obtained a patient hearing, and a favourable judgment from king Agrippa."

Dr. Barlow. "It has always appeared to me, that a ſtrong reaſon why the younger part of a clergyman's life ſhould be in a good meaſure devoted to learning is, that he may afterwards diſcover its comparative

vanity. It would have been a leſs difficult ſacrifice for St. Paul to profeſs that he had renounced all things for religion, if he had had nothing to renounce; and to count all things as droſs in the compariſon if he had had no gold to put in the empty ſcale. Gregory Nazianzen, one of the moſt accompliſhed maſters of Greek literature, declared that the chief value which he ſet upon it was, that in poſſeſſing it, he had ſomething of worth in itſelf to eſteem as nothing in compariſon of Chriſtian truth. And it is delightful to ſee Selden and Grotius, and Paſcal and Salmaſius, whom I may be allowed to quote, without being ſuſpected of profeſſional prejudice, as none of them were clergymen, while they warmly recommended to others, that learning of which they themſelves were the moſt aſtoniſhing examples, at the ſame time dedicating their lives to the advancement of religion. It is delightful I ſay, to hear them acknowledge that their learning was only valuable as it put it in their power to promote Chriſtianity, and

to

to have ſomething to ſacrifice for its ſake."

Tyrrel. "I can willingly allow that a poet, a dramatic poet eſpecially, may ſtudy the works of the great critics of antiquity with ſome profit; but that a Chriſtian writer of ſermons can have any juſt ground for ſtudying a pagan critic, is to me quite inconceivable."

Stanley. "And yet, Mr. Tyrrel, a ſermon is a work which demands regularity of plan, as well as a poem. It requires too ſomething of the ſame unity, arrangement, diviſions, and lucid order as a tragedy; ſomething of the exordium, and the peroration which belong to the compoſition of the orator. I do not mean that he is conſtantly to exhibit all this, but he ſhould always underſtand it. And a diſcreet clergyman, eſpecially one who is to preach before auditors of the higher rank, and who, in order to obtain reſpect from them, wiſhes to excel in the art of compoſition, will ſcarcely be leſs attentive to form his judgment by ſome acquaintance with Longinus and Quintilian

tilian than a dramatic poet. A writer of verſe, it is true, may pleaſe to a certain degree by the force of mere genius, and a writer of ſermons will inſtruct by the mere power of his piety; but neither the one nor the other will ever write well, if they do not poſſeſs the principles of good writing, and form themſelves on the models of good writers."

"Writing," ſaid Sir John, "to a certain degree is an art, or, if you pleaſe, a trade. And as no man is allowed to ſet up in an ordinary trade till he has ſerved a long apprenticeſhip to its *myſteries* (the word, I think, uſed in indentures); ſo no man ſhould ſet up for a writer till he knows ſomewhat of the myſteries of the art he is about to practiſe. He may, after all, if he want talents, produce a vapid and inefficient book; but poſſeſs what talents he may, he will, without knowledge, produce a crude and indigeſted one."

Tyrrel. "Still I inſiſt upon it, that in a Chriſtian miniſter the luſtre of learning is tinſel, and human wiſdom folly."

Stanley. "I am entirely of your opinion, if he reſt in his learning as an *end* inſtead of uſing it as a *means*; if the fame, or the pleaſure, or even the human profit of learning be his ultimate object. Learning in a clergyman without religion is droſs, is nothing; not ſo religion without learning. I am perſuaded that much good is done by men who, though deficient in this reſpect, are abundant in zeal and piety; but the good they do ariſes from the exertion of their piety, and not from the deficiency of their learning. Their labours are beneficial from the talent they exerciſe, and not from their want of another talent. The ſpirit of God can work and often does work by feeble inſtruments, and divine truth by its own omnipotent energy can effect its own purpoſes. But particular inſtances do not go to prove that the inſtrument ought not to be fitted and poliſhed, and ſharpened for its allotted work. Every ſtudent ſhould be emulouſly watchful that he do not diminiſh the ſtock of profeſſional credit by his

his idleneſs; he ſhould be ſtimulated to individual exertion, by bearing in mind that the Engliſh clergy have always been allowed by foreigners to be the moſt learned body in the world."

Dr. Barlow. "What Mr. Stanley has ſaid of the value of knowledge does not at all militate againſt ſuch fundamental prime truths as—'This is eternal life to *know* God and Jeſus Chriſt whom he has ſent—I deſire to *know* nothing, ſave Jeſus Chriſt. The natural man cannot *know* the things of the ſpirit of God. The world by wiſdom *knew* not God,' and a hundred other ſuch paſſages."

Tyrrel, "Aye, Doctor, now you talk a little more like a Chriſtian miniſter. But from the greater part of what has been aſſerted, you are all of you ſuch advocates for human reaſon and human learning, as to give an air of paganiſm to your ſentiments."

Stanley. "It does not diminiſh the utility though it abaſes the pride of learning, that Chriſtianity did not come into the world by human diſcovery, or the diſquiſitions of

reaſon, but by immediate revelation. Thoſe who adopt your way of thinking, Mr. Tyrrel, ſhould bear in mind, that the work of God, in changing the heart, is not intended to ſupply the place of the human faculties. God expects, in his moſt highly favoured ſervants, the diligent exerciſe of their natural powers; and if any human being has a ſtronger call for the exerciſe of wiſdom and judgment than another, it is a religious clergyman. Chriſtianity does not ſuperſede the uſe of natural gifts, but turns them into their proper channel.

"One diſtinction has often ſtruck me. The enemy of mankind ſeizes on the ſoul through the medium of the paſſions and ſenſes: the divine friend of man addreſſes him through his rational powers—*the eyes of your underſtanding being enlightened*, ſays the Apoſtle."

"Here I ventured to obſerve, "that the higheſt panegyric beſtowed on one of the brighteſt luminaries of our church, is, that his name is ſeldom mentioned without the epithet *judicious* being prefixed to it. Yet does

does Hooker want fervour? Does Hooker want zeal? Does Hooker want courage in declaring the whole counsel of God?"

Sir John. "I hope we have now no clergymen to whom we may apply the biting sarcasm of Dr. South, on some of the popular but illiterate preachers of the opposite party in his day, 'that there was all the confusion of Babel, without the gift of tongues.'"

Stanley. "And yet that party produced some great scholars, and many eminently pious men. But look back to that day, and especially to the period a little antecedent to it, at those prodigies of erudition, the old bishops and other divines of our Church. They were, perhaps, somewhat too profuse of their learning in their discourses, or rather they were so brimful, that they involuntarily overflowed. A juster taste, in our time, avoids that lavish display, which then not only crowded the margin, but forced itself into every part of the body of the work. The display of erudition might be wrong, but one thing is clear, it proved they had it; and, as Dryden said, when he was accused of

having too much wit, 'after all it is a good crime."

"We may juſtly," ſaid Dr. Barlow, "in the refinement of modern taſte, cenſure their prolixity, and ridicule their redundancies; we may ſmile at their diviſions, which are numberleſs; and at their ſub-diviſions which are endleſs; we may allow that this labour for perſpicuity ſometimes produced perplexity. But let us confeſs they always went to the bottom of whatever they embarked in. They ranſacked the ſtores of ancient learning, and the treaſures of modern ſcience, not to indulge their vanity by obtruding their acquirements, but to prove, to adorn, and to illuſtrate the doctrine they delivered. How incredible muſt their induſtry have been, when the bare tranſcript of their voluminous folios ſeems alone ſufficient to have occupied a long life!"

"The method," ſaid I, "which they adopted, of ſaying every thing that could be ſaid on all topics, and exhauſting them to the very dregs, though it may and does tire the patience of the reader, yet it never leaves him ignorant;

ignorant; and of two evils had not an author better be tedious than ſuperficial? From an overflowing veſſel you may gather more indeed than you want, but from an empty one you can gather nothing."

Tyrrel. "It appears to me that you wiſh to make a clergyman every thing but a Chriſtian, and to beſtow upon him every requiſite except faith."

Stanley. "God forbid that I ſhould make any compariſon between human learning and Chriſtian principle; the one is indeed lighter than the duſt of the balance, when weighed againſt the other. All I contend for is, that they are not incompatible, and that human knowledge, uſed only in ſubſerviency to that of the ſcriptures, may advance the intereſts of religion. For the better elucidation of thoſe ſcriptures, a clergyman ſhould know not a little of ancient languages. Without ſome inſight into remote hiſtory and antiquities, eſpecially the Jewiſh, he will be unable to explain many of the manners and cuſtoms recorded in the ſacred volume. Ignorance in ſome of theſe points

has drawn many attacks on our religion from ſceptical writers. As to a thorough knowledge of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, it would be ſuperfluous to recommend that, it being the hiſtory of his own immediate profeſſion. It is therefore requiſite, not only for the general purpoſes of inſtruction, but that he may be enabled to guard againſt modern innovation, by knowing the origin and progreſs of the various hereſies with which the Church in all ages has been infeſted."

Tyrrel. "But he may be thoroughly acquainted with all this and not have one ſpark of light."

Dr. Barlow. "He may indeed, with deep concern I allow it. I will go further. The pride of learning, when not ſubdued by religion, may help to extinguiſh that ſpark. Reaſon has been too much decried by one party, and too much deified by the other. The difference between reaſon and revelation ſeems to be the ſame as between the eye and the light; the one is the organ of viſion, the other the ſource of illumination."

Tyrrel. "Take notice, Stanley, that if I can

can help it, I'll never attend your accomplished clergyman."

Stanley. (Smiling) "I have not yet compleated the circle of his accomplishments. Besides what we call book learning, there is another species of knowledge in which some truly good men are sadly deficient, I mean an acquaintance with human nature. The knowledge of the world, and of Him who made it: the study of the heart of man, and Him who has the hearts of all men in his hand, enable a minister to excel in the art of instruction; one kind of knowledge reflecting light upon the other. The knowledge of mankind then, I may venture to assert, is, next to religion, one of the first requisites of a preacher; and I cannot help ascribing the little success which has sometimes attended the ministry of even worthy men, to their want of this grand ingredient. It will diminish the use they might make of the great doctrines of our religion, if they are ignorant of the various modifications of the human

human character to which thoſe doctrines are to be addreſſed.

"As no man ever made a true poet without this talent, one may venture to ſay, that few without it have ever made eminent preachers. Deſtitute of this, the moſt elaborate addreſſes will be only random ſhot, which, if they hit, it will be more owing to chance than to ſkill. Without this knowledge, warmed by Chriſtian affection, guided by Chriſtian judgment, and tempered with Chriſtian meekneſs, a clergyman will not be able in the pulpit to accommodate himſelf to the various wants of his hearers: without this knowledge in his private ſpiritual viſits, he will reſemble thoſe empirics in medicine who have but one method of treatment for all diſeaſes, and who apply indiſcriminately the ſame pill and the ſame drop to the various diſtempers of all ages, ſexes, and conſtitutions. This ſpirit of accommodation does not conſiſt in falſifying, or abridging, or ſoftening, or diſguiſing

guiſing any truth; but in applying truth in every form, communicating it in every direction, and diverting it into every channel. Some good men ſeem ſadly to forget that precept—*making a difference*—for they act as if all characters were exactly alike."

Tyrrel. "You talk as if you would wiſh clergymen to depart from the ſingleneſs of truth, and preach two goſpels."

Stanley. "Far from it. But though truth is ſingle, the human character is multiplied almoſt to infinity, and cannot be addreſſed with advantage if it be not well underſtood. I am aſhamed of having ſaid ſo much on ſuch a ſubject in the preſence of Dr. Barlow, who is ſilent through delicacy. I will only add, that a learned young clergyman is not driven for neceſſary relaxation to improper amuſements. His mind will be too highly ſet, to be ſatisfied with thoſe light diverſions which purloin time without affording the neceſſary renovation to the body and ſpirits, which is the true and lawful end of all amuſement. In all circumſtances, learning confers

confers dignity on his character. It enables him to raiſe the tone of general converſation, and is a ſafe kind of medium with perſons of a higher claſs who are not religious, and it will always put it in his power to keep the ſtandard of intercourſe above the degrading topics of diverſions, ſports and vulgar goſſip."

Dr. Barlow. "You ſee, Mr. Tyrrel, that a prudent combatant thinks only of defending himſelf on that ſide where he is aſſaulted. If Mr. Stanley's antagoniſt had been a vehement advocate for clerical learning as the great eſſential of his profeſſion, he would have been the firſt to caution him againſt the pride and inflation which often attend learning, when not governed by religion. Learning not ſo governed might injure Chriſtian humility, and thus become a far more formidable enemy to religion than that which it was called in to oppoſe."

Sir John ſaid, ſmiling, "I will not apply to the clergy what Raſſelas ſays to Imlac, after he had been enumerating the number-

leſs

leſs qualities neceſſary to the perfection of the poetic art—'Thou haſt convinced me that no man can be a poet;'—but if all Stanley ſays be juſt, I will venture to aſſert that no common ſhare of induſtry and zeal will qualify a young ſtudent for that ſacred profeſſion. I have indeed no experience on the ſubject, as it relates to the clerical order, but I conceive in general that learning is the beſt human preſervative of virtue; that it ſafely fills up leiſure, and honourably adorns life, even where it does not form the buſineſs of it."

"Learning too," ſaid I, "has this ſtrong recommendation, that it is the offspring of a moſt valuable virtue, I mean Induſtry; a quality on which I am aſhamed to ſee Pagans frequently ſet a higher value than we ſeem to do."

"I believe indeed," replied Sir John, "that the ancients had a higher idea of induſtry and ſevere application than we have. Tully calls them the *imperatoriæ virtutes*, and Alexander ſaid that ſlaves might indulge in

in ſloth, but that it was a moſt royal thing to labour."

Stanley. "It has been the error of ſenſible men of the world, to erect talents and learning into idols, which they would have univerſally and excluſively worſhipped. This has perhaps driven ſome religious men into ſuch a fear of over-cultivating learning, that they do not cultivate it at all. Hence the intervals between their religious employments, and intervals there muſt be while we are inveſted with theſe frail bodies, are languid and inſipid, waſted in trifling and ſauntering. Nay it is well if this diſoccupation of the intellect do not lead from ſloth to improper indulgences."

"You are perfectly right," ſaid Sir John, "our worthy friend Thompſon is a living illuſtration of your remark. He was at college with us; he brought from thence a competent ſhare of knowledge; has a fair underſtanding, and the manners of a gentleman. For ſeveral years paſt, he has not only adopted a religious character, but

but is truly pious. As he is much in earneſt he very properly aſſigns a conſiderable portion of his time to religious reading. But as he is of no profeſſion, the intermediate hours often hang heavy on his hands. He continues to live in ſome meaſure in the world without the inconſiſtency of entering into its purſuits; but, having renounced the ſtudy of human learning, and yet accuſtoming himſelf to mix occaſionally with general ſociety, he has few ſubjects in common with his company, but is dull and ſilent in all rational converſation, of which religion is not the profeſſed object. He takes ſo little intereſt in any literary or political diſcuſſion, however uſeful, that it is evident nothing but his good breeding prevents his falling aſleep. At the ſame time, he ſcruples not to violate conſiſtency in another reſpect, for his table is ſo elaborately luxurious, that it ſeems as if he were willing to add to the pleaſures of ſenſe, what he deducts from thoſe of intellect."

"I have often thought," ſaid Mr. Stanley, "of ſending him Dr. Barrow's *three ſermons on induſtry in our calling as Chriſtians, induſtry as gentlemen, and induſtry as ſcholars*; which ſermons, by the way, I intended to have made my ſon read at leaſt once a year, had he lived; that he might ſee the conſiſtency, the compatibility, nay the analogy of the two latter with the former. I wiſh the ſpirit of theſe three diſcourſes was infuſed into every gentleman, every ſcholar, and every Chriſtian through the land. For my own part, I ſhould have ſedulouſly laboured to make my ſon a ſound ſcholar; while I ſhould have laboured ſtill more ſedulouſly to convince him that the value of learning depends ſolely on the purpoſes to which it is devoted. I would have a Chriſtian gentleman able to beat the world at its own weapons, and convince it, that it is not from penury of mind, or inability to diſtinguiſh himſelf in other matters, that he applies himſelf to ſeek that wiſdom which is from above; that he

he does not fly to religion as a ſhelter from the ignominy of ignorance, but from a deep conviction of the comparative vanity of that very learning, which he yet is ſo aſſiduous to acquire."

During this converſation, it was amuſing to obſerve the different impreſſions made on the minds of our two college gueſts. Young Tyrrel, who, with moderate parts and ſlender application, had been taught to adopt ſome of his uncle's dogmas as the cheapeſt way of being wiſe, greedily ſwallowed his eulogium of clerical ignorance, which the young man ſeemed to feel as a vindication of his own neglected ſtudies, and an encouragement to his own mediocrity of intellect. While the intereſting young baronet, though ſilent through modeſty, diſcovered in his intelligent eyes, evident marks of ſatisfaction, in hearing that literature, for which he was every day acquiring a higher reliſh, warmly recommended as the beſt purſuit of a gentleman, by the two men in the world, for whoſe judgment he

entertained the higheſt reverence. At the ſame time it raiſed his veneration for Chriſtian piety, when he ſaw it ſo ſeduloufly practiſed by theſe advocates for human learning.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

DURING theſe converſations, I remarked that Lucilla, though ſhe commonly obſerved the moſt profound ſilence, had her attention always rivetted on the ſpeaker. If that ſpeaker was Dr. Barlow, or her father, or any one who ſhe thought entitled to particular reſpect, ſhe gently laid down her work, and as quietly reſumed it when they had done ſpeaking.

I obſerved to Sir John Belfield, afterwards, as we were walking together, how modeſtly flattering her manner was when any of us were reading! How intelligent her ſilence! How well-bred her attention!

I have often contraſted it," replied he, " with the manner of ſome other ladies of my acquaintance, who are ſometimes of our quiet evening party. When one

is reading hiſtory, or any ordinary book aloud to them, I am always pleaſed that they ſhould purſue their little employments. It amuſes themſelves, and gives eaſe and familiarity to the ſocial circle. But while I have been reading, as has ſometimes happened, a paſſage of the higheſt ſublimity, or moſt tender intereſt, I own I feel a little indignant to ſee the ſhuttle plied with as eager aſſiduity, as if the deſtinies themſelves were weaving the thread. I have known a lady take up the candleſtick to ſearch for her knetting-pin, in the midſt of Cato's ſoliloquy; or ſtoop to pick up her ſciſſars, while Hamlet ſays to the ghoſt, 'I'll go no further.' I remember another who would whiſper acroſs the table to borrow ſilk while Lear has been raving in the ſtorm, or Macbeth ſtarting at the ſpirit of Banquo; and make ſigns for a thread-paper, while cardinal Beaufort 'dies, and makes no ſign.' Nay, once I remember when I was with much agitation hurrying through the gazette of the

the battle of Trafalgar, while I pronounced, almoſt agonized, the laſt memorable words of the immortal Nelſon, I heard one lady whiſper to another that ſhe had broke her needle."

"It would be difficult to determine," replied I, "whether this inattention moſt betrays want of ſenſe, of feeling, or of good breeding. The habit of attention ſhould be carefully formed in early life, and then the mere force of cuſtom would teach theſe ill-bred women 'to aſſume the virtue if they have it not."

The family at the Grove was with us an inexhauſtible topic whenever we met. I obſerved to Sir John, "that I had ſometimes obſerved in charitable families, a diſplay, a buſtle, a kind of animal reſtleſſneſs, a ſort of mechanical *beſoin* to be charitably buſy. That though they fulfilled conſcientiouſly one part of the apoſtolic injunction, that of "giving," yet they failed in the other clauſe, that of doing it "with ſimplicity." "Yes," replied he, "I

viſit a charitable lady in the town, who almoſt puts me out of love with benevolence. Her own bounties form the entire ſubject of her converſation. As ſoon as the breakfaſt is removed, the table is always regularly covered with plans and propoſals and ſubſcription papers. This diſplay conveniently performs the three-fold office of publiſhing her own charities, furniſhing ſubjects of altercation, and raiſing contributions on the viſitor. Her narratives really coſt me more than my ſubſcription. She is ſo full of debate and detail and oppoſition; ſhe makes you read ſo many papers of her own drawing up, and ſo many anſwers to the ſchemes of other people, and ſhe has ſo many objections to every other perſon's mode of doing good, and ſo many arguments to prove that her own is the beſt, that ſhe appears leſs like a benevolent lady than a chicaning attorney."

"Nothing," ſaid I, "corrects this buſtling bounty ſo completely, as when it is mixed

mixed up with religion, I ſhould rather ſay as when it flows from religion. This motive, ſo far from diminiſhing the energy, augments it; but it cures the diſplay, and converts the irritation into a principle. It transfers the activity from the tongue to the heart. It is the only ſort of charity which 'bleſſes twice.' All charity, indeed, bleſſes the receiver; but the bleſſing promiſed to the giver, I have ſometimes trembled to think, may be forfeited even by a generous mind, from oſtentation and parade in the manner, and want of purity in the motive."

"In Stanley's family," replied he, in a more ſerious tone, "I have met with a complete refutation of that favourite maxim of the world, that religion is a dull thing itſelf, and make its profeſſors gloomy and moroſe. Charles! I have often frequented houſes where pleaſure was the avowed object of idolatry. But to ſee the votaries of the 'reeling goddeſs,' after ſucceſſive nights paſſed in her temples! to

ſee the languor, the liſtleſſneſs, the diſcontent—you would rather have taken them for her victims than her worſhippers. So little mental vivacity, ſo little gaiety of heart! In ſhort, after no careleſs obſervation, I am compelled to declare, that I never ſaw two forms leſs alike than thoſe of Pleaſure and Happineſs."

"Your teſtimony, Sir John," ſaid I, "is of great weight in a caſe of which you are ſo experienced a judge. What a different ſcene do we now contemplate! Mr. Stanley ſeems to have diffuſed his own ſpirit through the whole family. What makes his example of ſuch efficacy is, that he conſiders the Chriſtian *temper* as ſo conſiderable a part of chriſtianity. This temper ſeems to imbue his whole ſoul, pervade his whole conduct, and influence his whole converſation. I ſee every day ſome freſh occaſion to admire his candour, his humility, his conſtant reference, not as a topic of diſcourſe, but as a principle of conduct, to the goſpel, as the ſtandard by which actions

actions are to be weighed. His conſcientious ſtrictneſs of ſpeech, his ſerious reproof of calumnies, his charitable conſtruction of every caſe which has two ſides; 'his ſimplicity and godly ſincerity;' his rule of referring all events to providential direction, and his invariable habit of vindicating the Divine goodneſs under diſpenſations, apparently the moſt unfavourable."

Here Sir John left me, and I could not forbear purſuing the ſubject in ſoliloquy as I proceeded in my walk.—I reflected with admiration that Mr. Stanley, in his religious converſation, rendered himſelf ſo uſeful, becauſe, inſtead of the uniform noſtrum of *the drop and the pill*, he applied a different claſs of arguments as the caſe required to objectors to the different parts of chriſtianity. To ill-informed perſons, who adopted a partial goſpel without underſtanding it as a ſcheme, or embracing it as a whole; —to thoſe who allow its truth merely on the ſame ground of evidence that eſtabliſhes

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the truth of any other well-authenticated hiſtory; and who, ſatisfied with this external evidence, not only do not feel its power on their own heart, but deny that it has any ſuch influence on the hearts of others;—to thoſe who believe the goſpel to be a mere code of ethics—to their antipodes who aſſert that Chriſt has lowered the requiſitions of the law:—to Lady Belfield who reſts on her charities,—Sir John on his correctneſs,—Lady Afton on her auſterities;—to this man who values himſelf ſolely on the ſtoutneſs of his orthodoxy, to another on the firmneſs of his integrity; to a third on the peculiarities of his party,—to all theſe he addreſſes himſelf with a particular view to their individual errors. This he does with ſuch a diſcriminating application to the caſe, as might lead the ill-informed to ſuſpect that he was not equally earneſt in thoſe other points, which, not being attacked, he does not feel himſelf called on to defend, but which, had they been attacked, he would then have defended with equal zeal

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as relative to the diſcuſſion. To crown all, I contemplated that affectionate warmth of heart, that ſympathizing kindneſs, that tenderneſs of feeling, of which the gay and the thoughtleſs fancy they themſelves poſſeſs the monopoly, while they make over-harſhneſs, auſterity, and want of charity to religious men, as their inſeparable characteriſtics.

Theſe qualities excite in my heart a feeling compounded of veneration, and of love. And Oh! how impoſſible it is, even in religion itſelf, to be diſintereſted? All theſe excellencies I contemplate with a more heart-felt delight, from the preſumptuous hope that I may one day have the felicity of connecting myſelf ſtill more intimately with them!

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII.

Some days after, while we were conversing over our tea, we heard the noise of a carriage, and Mr. Stanley looking out from a bow window in which he and I were sitting, said, it was Lady and Miss Rattle driving up the avenue. He had just time to add, "these are our *fine* neighbours. They always make a visit as soon as they come down, while all the gloss and lustre of London is fresh upon them. We have always one regular routine of conversation. While her Ladyship is pouring the fashions into Mrs. Stanley's ear, Miss Rattle, who is about Phœbe's age, entertains my daughters and me with the history of her own talents and acquirements."

Here they entered. After a few compliments, Lady Rattle seated herself between Lady Belfield and Mrs. Stanley at the upper

end of the room; while the fine, ſprightly boiſterous girl of fifteen, or ſixteen, threw herſelf back on the ſofa at nearly her full length, between Mr. Stanley and me, the Miſs Stanleys and Sir John ſitting near us within hearing of her lively loquacity.

"Well, Miſs Amelia," ſaid Mr. Stanley, "I dare ſay you have made good uſe of your time this winter; I ſuppoſe you have ere now completed the whole circle of the arts. Now let me hear what you have been doing, and tell me your whole atchievments, as frankly as you uſed to do when you were a little girl." "Indeed," replied ſhe, "I have not been idle, if I muſt ſpeak the truth. One has ſo many things to learn, you know. I have gone on with my French and Italian of courſe, and I am beginning German. Then comes my drawing maſter; he teaches me to paint flowers and ſhells, and to draw ruins and buildings, and to take views. He is a good ſoul, and is finiſhing a ſet of pictures, and half a dozen fire ſcreens which I began for mamma.

mamma. He *does* help me to be ſure, but indeed I do ſome of it myſelf, don't I, mamma?" calling out to her mother, who was too much abſorbed in her own narratives to attend to her daughter.

"And then," purſued the young prattler, "I learn varniſhing, and gilding, and japanning. And next winter I ſhall learn modelling, and etching, and engraving in mezzotinto and aquatinta, for Lady Di. Daſh learns etching, and mamma ſays, as I ſhall have a better fortune than Lady Di, ſhe vows I ſhall learn every thing ſhe does. Then I have a dancing maſter, who teaches me the Scotch and Iriſh ſteps; and another who teaches me attitudes, and I ſhall ſoon learn the waltz, and I can ſtand longer on one leg already than Lady Di. Then I have a ſinging maſter, and another who teaches me the harp, and another for the piano-forte. And what little time I can ſpare from theſe *principal* things, I give by odd minutes to ancient and modern hiſtory, and geography, and aſtronomy, and grammar, and

and botany. Then I attend lectures on chemiſtry, and experimental philoſophy, for as I am not yet come out, I have not much to do in the evenings: and mamma ſays, there is nothing in the world that money can pay for, but what I ſhall learn. And I run ſo delightfully faſt from one thing to another that I am never tired. What makes it ſo pleaſant is, as ſoon as I am fairly ſet in with one maſter, another arrives. I ſhould hate to be long at the ſame thing. But I ſhan't have a great while to work ſo hard, for as ſoon as I come out, I ſhall give it all up, except muſick and dancing."

All this time Lucilla ſat liſtening with a ſmile, behind the complacency of which ſhe tried to conceal her aſtoniſhment. Phœbe, who had leſs ſelf-controul, was on the very verge of a broad laugh. Sir John, who had long lived in a ſoil where this ſpecies is indigenous, had been too long accuſtomed to all its varieties, to feel much aſtoniſhment at this ſpecimen, which, however, he ſat contemplating

templating with philoſophical, but diſcriminating coolneſs.

For my own part, my mind was wholly abſorbed in contraſting the coarſe manners of this voluble, and intrepid, but good humoured girl, with the quiet, cheerful, and unaſſuming elegance of Lucilla.

"I ſhould be afraid, Miſs Rattle," ſaid Mr. Stanley, "if you did not look in ſuch blooming health, that, with all theſe inceſſant labours, you did not allow yourſelf time for reſt. Surely you never ſleep?" "O yes, that I do, and eat too," ſaid ſhe; "my life is not quite ſo hard and moping as you fancy. What between ſhopping and morning viſitings with mamma, and ſeeing ſights, and the park, and the gardens, (which by the way, I hate, except on a Sunday when they are crowded,) and our young balls, which are four or five in a week after Eaſter, and mamma's muſick parties at home, I contrive to enjoy myſelf tolerably; though after I have been preſented, I ſhall be a thouſand times better off, for then

then I ſha'nt have a moment to myſelf. "Won't that be delightful," ſaid ſhe, twitching my arm rather roughly, by way of recalling my attention, which, however, had ſeldom wandered?

As ſhe had now run out her London materials, the news of the neighbourhood next furniſhed a ſubject for her volubility. After ſhe had mentioned in detail one or two ſtories of low village goſſip, while I was wondering how ſhe could come at them, ſhe ſtruck me dumb by quoting the Coachman as her authority. This enigma was ſoon explained. The mother and daughter having exhauſted their different topics of diſcourſe, nearly at the ſame time, they took their leave, in order to enrich every family in the neighbourhood, on whom they were going to call, with the ſame valuable knowledge which they had imparted to us.

Mr. Stanley conducted Lady Rattle, and I led her daughter; but as I offered to hand her into the carriage, ſhe ſtarted

back with a ſprightly motion, and ſcream-ed out, "O no, not in the inſide, pray help me up to the *Dickey*, I always pro-teſt I never *will* ride with any body but the Coachman, if we go ever ſo far." So ſaying, with a ſpring which ſhewed how much ſhe deſpiſed my aſſiſtance, the lit-tle hoyden was ſeated in a moment, nod-ding familiarly at me, as if I had been an old friend.

Then with a voice, emulating that which, when paſſing by Charing-Croſs, I have heard iſſue from an over-ſtuffed ſtage vehicle, when a robuſt ſailor has thruſt his body out at the window, the fair creature vociferated, "Drive on, Coachman!" He obeyed, and ſhe, turning round her whole perſon, continued nod-ding at me till they were out of ſight.

"Here is a maſs of accompliſhments," ſaid I, "without one particle of mind, one ray of common ſenſe, or one ſhade of delicacy! Surely ſomewhat leſs time, and

and less money might have sufficed to qualify a companion for the Coachman.

"What poor creatures are we men," said I to Mr. Stanley as soon as he came in! "We think it very well, if after much labour and long application, we can attain to one or two of the innumerable acquirements of this gay little girl. Nor is this I find the rare atchievement of one happy genius—There is a whole class of these miraculous females. Miss Rattle

Is knight o' th' shire, and represents them all."

"It is only young ladies," replied he, "whose vast abilities, whose mighty grasp of mind, can take in every thing. Among men, learned men, talents are commonly directed into some one channel, and fortunate is he, who in that one attains to excellence. The linguist is rarely a painter, nor is the mathematician often a poet. Even in one profession there are divisions and subdivisions. The same Lawyer

never thinks of preſiding both in the King's Bench, and in the Court of Chancery. The ſcience of healing is not only divided into its three diſtinct branches, but in the profeſſion of Surgery only, how many are the ſubdiviſions! One profeſſor undertakes the eye, another the ear, and a third the teeth. But woman, ambitious, aſpiring, univerſal, triumphant, glorious woman, even at the age of a ſchool-boy, encounters the whole range of arts, attacks the whole circle of the ſciences."

"A mighty maze, and *quite* without a plan," replied Sir John, laughing. "But the truth is, the misfortune does not ſo much conſiſt in their learning every thing, as in their knowing nothing; I mean nothing well. When gold is beaten out to wide, the lamina muſt needs be very thin. And you may obſerve, the more valuable attainments, though they are not to be left out of the modiſh plan, are kept in the back ground: and are to be picked

up

up out of the odd remnants of that time, the ſum of which is devoted to frivolous accompliſhments. All this gay confuſion of acquirements, theſe holiday ſplendors, this ſuperfluity of enterprise, enumerated in the firſt part of her catalogue, is the *real buſineſs* of education, the latter part is incidental, and if not taught is not learnt.

"As to the lectures ſo boaſtfully mentioned, they may be doubtleſs made very uſeful ſubſidiaries to inſtruction. They moſt happily illuſtrate book-knowledge; but if the pupil's inſtructions in private do not precede, and keep pace with theſe uſeful public exhibitions, her knowledge will be only preſumptuous ignorance. She may learn to talk of oxygen and hydrogen, and deflagration, and trituration, but ſhe will know nothing of the ſcience except the terms. It is not knowing the name of his tools that makes an artiſt; and I ſhould be afraid of the vanity which ſuch ſuperficial information would communicate to a mind, not previouſly pre-

pared, nor exerciſed at home in corre-ſponding ſtudies. But as Miſs Rattle honeſtly confeſſed, as ſoon as ſhe *comes out*, all theſe things will die away of themſelves, and dancing and muſic will be almoſt all which will ſurvive of her multifarious purſuits."

"I look upon the great predominance of muſic in female education," ſaid Mr. Stanley, "to be the ſource of more miſchief than is ſuſpected; not from any evil in the thing itſelf, but from its being ſuch a gulph of time, as really to leave little room for ſolid acquiſitions. I love muſic, and were it only cultivated as an amuſement, ſhould commend it. But the monſtrous proportion, or rather diſproportion of life which it ſwallows up, even in many religious families, and this is the chief ſubject of my regret, has converted an innocent diverſion into a poſitive ſin. I queſtion if many gay men devote more hours in a day to idle purpoſes, than the daughters of many pious

parents

parents ſpend in this amuſement. All theſe hours the mind lies fallow, improvement is at a ſtand, if even it does not retrogade. Nor is it the ſhreds and ſcraps of time, ſtolen in the intervals of better things, that is ſo devoted; but it is the morning, the prime, the profitable, the active hours, when the mind is vigorous, the ſpirits light, the intellect awake and freſh, and the whole being wound up by the refreſhment of ſleep, and animated by the return of light and life, for nobler ſervices."

"If," ſaid Sir John, "muſic were cultivated to embelliſh retirement, to be practiſed where pleaſures are ſcarce, and good performers not to be had, it would quite alter the caſe. But the truth is, theſe highly taught ladies a renot only living in public, where they conſtantly hear the moſt exquiſite profeſſors, but they have them alſo at their own houſes. Now one of theſe two things muſt happen. Either the performance of the lady

will be so inferior as not to be worth hearing on the comparison, or so good that she will fancy herself the rival, instead of the admirer of the performer, whom she had better pay and praise than fruitlessly emulate."

"This anxious struggle to reach the unattainable excellence of the professor," said Mr. Stanley, "often brings to my mind the contest for victory between the ambitious nightingale and the angry lutanist in the beautiful Prolusion of Strada."

"It is to the predominance of this talent," replied I, "that I ascribe the want of companionableness of which I complain. The excellence of musical performance is a decorated screen, behind which all defects in domestic knowledge, in taste, judgment and literature, and the talents which make an elegant companion, are creditably concealed."

"I have made," said Sir John, "another remark. Young ladies, who from apparent

apparent ſhyneſs do not join in the converſation of a ſmall ſelect party, are always ready enough to entertain them with muſic on the ſlighteſt hint. Surely it is equally modeſt to *ſay* as to *ſing*, eſpecially to ſing thoſe melting ſtrains we ſometimes hear ſung, and which we ſhould be aſhamed to hear ſaid. After all, how few hours are there in a week, in which a man engaged in the purſuits of life, and a woman in the duties of a family, wiſh to employ in muſic. I am fond of it myſelf, and Lady Belfield plays admirably; but with the cares inſeparable from the conſcientious diſcharge of her duty, with ſo many children, how little time has ſhe to play, or I to liſten! But there is no day, no hour, no meal in which I do not enjoy in her the ever-ready pleaſure of an elegant and intereſting companion. A man of ſenſe, when all goes ſmoothly, wants to be entertained; under vexation to be ſoothed; in difficulties to be counſelled; in ſorrow to be comforted. In a mere

a mere artiſt can he reaſonably look for theſe reſources?"

"Only figure to yourſelf," replied Mr. Stanley, "my ſix girls daily playing their four hours a piece, which is now a moderate allowance! As we have but one inſtrument, they muſt be at it in ſucceſſion, day and night, to keep pace with their neighbours. If I may compare light things with ſerious ones, it would reſemble," added he, ſmiling, "the perpetual pſalmody of good Mr. Nicholas Ferrar, who had relays of muſicians every ſix hours to ſing the whole Pſalter through every day and night! I mean not to ridicule that holy man; but my girls thus keeping their uſeleſs virgils in turn, we ſhould only have the melody without any of the piety. No, my friend! I will have but two or three ſinging birds to cheer my little grove. If all the world are performers, there will ſoon be no hearers. Now, as I am reſolved in my own family,

that

that ſome ſhall liſten, I will have but few to perform."

"It muſt be confeſſed," ſaid Sir John, "that Miſs Rattle is no ſervile imitator of the vapid tribe of the ſuperficially accompliſhed. Her violent animal ſpirits prevent her from growing ſmooth by attrition. She is as rough and angular as ruſticity itſelf could have made her. Where ſtrength of character, however, is only marked by the worſt concomitant of ſtrength, which is coarſeneſs, I ſhould almoſt prefer inanity itſelf."

"I ſhould a little fear," ſaid I, "that I lay too much ſtreſs on companionableneſs; on the *poſitive duty of being agreeable at home*, had I not early learnt the doctrine from my father, and ſeen it exemplified ſo happily in the practice of my mother."

"I entirely agree with you, Charles," ſaid Mr. Stanley, "as to the abſolute *morality* of being agreeable, and even entertaining in one's own family circle. Nothing ſo ſoon, and ſo certainly

wear

wears out the happineſs of married perſons, as that too common bad effect of familiarity, the ſinking down into dulneſs and inſipidity; neglecting to keep alive the flame by the delicacy which firſt kindled it; want of vigilance in keeping the temper cheerful by Chriſtian diſcipline, and the faculties bright by conſtant uſe. Mutual affection decays of itſelf, even where there is no great moral turpitude, without mutual endeavours, not only to improve, but to amuſe."

"This," continued he, "is one of the great arts of *home enjoyment*. That it is ſo little practiſed, accounts in a good meaſure for the undomeſtic turn of too many married perſons. The man meets abroad with amuſement, and the woman with attentions, to which they are not accuſtomed at home. Whereas a capacity to pleaſe on the one part, and a diſpoſition to be pleaſed on the other, in their own houſe, would make moſt viſits appear

appear dull. But then the diſpoſition and the capacity muſt be cultivated antecedently to marriage. A woman, whoſe whole education has been rehearſal, will always be dull, except ſhe lives on the ſtage, conſtantly diſplaying what ſhe has been ſedulouſly acquiring. Books on the contrary, well choſen books, do not lead to exhibition. The knowledge a woman acquires in private, deſires no witneſſes; the poſſeſſion is the pleaſure. It improves herſelf, it embelliſhes her family ſociety, it entertains her huſband, it informs her children. The gratification is cheap, is ſafe, is always to be had at home."

"It is ſuperfluous," ſaid Sir John, "to decorate women ſo highly for early youth; youth is itſelf a decoration. We miſtakingly adorn moſt that part of life which leaſt requires it, and neglect to provide for that which will want it moſt. It is for that ſober period when life has loſt its freſhneſs, the paſſions their intenſeneſs,

and the ſpirits their hilarity, that we ſhould be preparing. Our wiſdom would be to anticipate the wants of middle life, to lay in a ſtore of notions, ideas, principles and habits, which may preſerve, or transfer to the mind that affection, which was at firſt partly attracted by the perſon. But to add a vacant mind to a form which has ceaſed to pleaſe; to provide no ſubſidiary aid to beauty while it laſts, and eſpecially no ſubſtitute when it is departed, is to render life comfortleſs, and marriage dreary."

"The reading of a cultivated woman," ſaid Mr. Stanley, "commonly occupies leſs time than the muſic of a muſical woman, or the idleneſs of an indolent woman, or the dreſs of a vain woman, or the diſſipation of a fluttering woman; ſhe is therefore likely to have more leiſure for her duties, as well as more inclination, and a ſounder judgment for performing them. But pray obſerve, that I aſſume my reading woman to be a reli-

a religious woman; and I will not anſwer for the effect of literary vanity, more than for that of any other vanity, in a mind not habitually diſciplined by Chriſtian principles, the only ſafe and infallible antidote for knowledge of every kind."

Before we had finiſhed our converſation, we were interrupted by the arrival of the poſt. Sir John eagerly opened the newſpaper; but inſtead of gratifying our impatience with the intelligence for which we panted from the glorious Spaniards, he read a paragraph which ſtated "that Miſs Denham had eloped with Signor Squallini, that they were on their way to Scotland, and that Lady Denham had been in fits ever ſince."

Lady Belfield with her uſual kindneſs was beginning to expreſs how much ſhe pitied her old acquaintance. "My dear Caroline," ſaid Sir John, "there is too much ſubſtantial and inevitable miſery in the world, for you to waſte much compaſſion on this fooliſh woman. Lady Denham

Denham has little reaſon to be ſurpriſed at an event which all reaſonable people muſt have anticipated. Provoking and diſgraceful as it is, what has ſhe to blame but her own infatuation? This Italian was the aſſociate of all her pleaſures; the conſtant theme of her admiration. He was admitted when her friends were excluded. The girl was continually hearing that muſic was the beſt gift, and that Signor Squallini was the beſt gifted. Miſs Denham" added he laughing, "had more wit than your Strada's nightingale. Inſtead of dropping down dead on the lute for envy, ſhe thought it beſt to run away with the lutaniſt for love. I pity the poor girl however, who has furniſhed ſuch a commentary to our text, and who is rather the victim of a wretched education than of her own bad propenſities."

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIV.

I HAD generally found that a Sunday paſſed in a viſit was ſo heavy a day, that I had been accuſtomed ſo to arrange my engagements, as commonly to exclude this from the days ſpent from home. I had often found that even where the week had been pleaſantly occupied, the neceſſity of paſſing ſeveral hours of a ſeaſon peculiarly deſigned for religious purpoſes, with people whoſe habits have little ſimilarity with our own, either draws one into their relaxed mode of getting rid of the day, or drives one to a retirement, which, having an unſociable appearance, is liable to the reproach of auſterity and gloom.

The caſe was quite different at Stanley Grove. The ſerioufneſs was without ſeverity, and the cheerfulneſs had no mixture of levity. The family ſeemed more than

uſually animated, and there was a variety in the religious purſuits of the young people, enlivened by intervals of cheerful and improving converſation, which particularly ſtruck Lady Belfield. She obſerved to me, that the difficulty of getting through the Sunday, without any mixture of worldly occupations or amuſements on the one hand, or of diſguſt and wearineſs on the other, was among the many right things, which ſhe had never been able to accompliſh in her own family.

As we walked from church one Sunday, Miſs Stanley told me that her father does not approve the habit of criticiſing the ſermon. He ſays that the cuſtom of pointing out the faults, cannot be maintained, without the cuſtom of watching for them, —that it gives the attention a wrong turn, and leads the hearer only to treaſure up ſuch paſſages as may ſerve for animadverſion, and a diſplay, not of Chriſtian temper, but of critical ſkill. If the general tenor and principle be right, that is the main point they

they are to look to, and not to hunt for philological errors.—That the hearer would do well to observe, whether it is not "he that sleeps," as often at least, as "Homer nods;" a remark exemplified at church, as often as on the occasion which suggested it.—That a critical spirit is the worst that can be brought out of church; being a symptom of an unhumbled mind, and an evidence, that whatever the sermon may have done for others, it has not benefited the caviller.

Here Mr. Stanley joined us. I found he did not encourage his family to take down the sermon. "It is no disparagement," said he, to the discourse preached, to presume that there may be as good already printed. Why therefore not read the printed sermon at home in the evening, instead of that, by which you ought to have been improving while it was delivering? If it be true that *faith cometh by hearing*, an inferior sermon, 'coming warm and instant from the heart,' assisted by all the surround-

ing ſolemnities, which make a ſermon *heard* ſo different from one *read*, may ſtrike more forcibly than an abler diſcourſe coolly peruſed at home. In writing, the mechanical act muſt neceſſarily leſſen the effect to the writer, and to the ſpectator it diminiſhes the dignity of the ſcene, and ſeems like ſhort hand writers taking down a trial.

"But that my daughters may not plead this as an excuſe for inattention," continued he, "I make it a part of their evening duty to repeat what they retain, ſeparately to me in my library. The conſciouſneſs that this repetition will be required of them, ſtimulates their diligence; and the exerciſe itſelf not only ſtrengthens the memory, but habituates to ſerious reflection."

At tea, Phœbe, a charming warm-hearted creature, but who, now and then, carried away by the impulſe of the moment, forgets habits and prohibitions, ſaid, "I think papa, Dr. Barlow was rather dull to-day. There was nothing new in the ſermon." "My dear," replied her father,

"we

we do not go to church to hear news. Chriſtianity is no novelty; and though it is true that we go to be inſtructed, yet we require to be reminded full as much as to be taught. General truths are what we all acknowledge, and all forget. We acknowledge them, becauſe a general aſſent of the underſtanding coſts but little; and we forget them, becauſe the remembrance would force upon the conſcience, a great deal of practical labour. To believe, and remember, and act upon, common, undiſputed, general truths, is the moſt important part of religion. This, though in fact very difficult, is overlooked, on account of its being ſuppoſed very eaſy. To keep up in the heart a lively impreſſion of a few plain momentous truths, is of more uſe than the ableſt diſcuſſion of a hundred controverted points.

"Now tell me, Phœbe, do you really think that you have remembered and practiſed all the inſtructions that you have received from Dr. Barlow's ſermons laſt year? If you have, though you will have

a better right to be critical, you will be leſs diſpoſed to be ſo. If you have not, do not complain that the ſermon is not new, till you have made all poſſible uſe of the old ones; which if you had done, you would have acquired ſo much humility, that you would meekly liſten even to what you already know. But however the diſcourſe may have been ſuperfluous to ſuch deep divines as Miſs Phœbe Stanley, it will be very uſeful to me, and to other hearers who are not ſo wiſe."

Poor Phœbe coloured up to her ears: tears ruſhed into her eyes. She was ſo overcome with ſhame, that regardleſs of the company, ſhe flew into her father's arms, and ſoftly whiſpered, that if he would forgive her fooliſh vanity, ſhe would never again be above being taught. The fond, but not blind father, withdrew with her. Lucilla followed, with looks of anxious love.

During their ſhort abſence, Mrs. Stanley ſaid, "Lucilla is ſo practically aware of the truth of her father's obſervation, that ſhe often

often ſays ſhe finds as much advantage as pleaſure in teaching the children at her ſchool. This elementary inſtruction obliges her continually to recur to firſt principles, and to keep conſtantly uppermoſt in her mind thoſe great truths contained in the articles of our belief, the commandments, and the prayer taught by our Redeemer. This perpetual ſimplifying of religion ſhe aſſures me, keeps her more humble, fixes her attention on fundamental truths, and makes her more indifferent to controverted points."

In a few minutes Mr. Stanley and his daughters returned cheerful and happy: Lucilla ſmiling like the angel of peace and love.

"If I were not afraid," ſaid Lady Belfield, "of falling under the ſame cenſure with my friend Phœbe," ſmiling on the ſweet girl, "I ſhould venture to ſay, that I thought "the ſermon rather too ſevere."

"Do not be afraid, Madam," replied Mr. Stanley; "though I diſapprove that

cheap and cruel criticiſm which makes a man *an offender for a word*, yet diſcuſſion does not neceſſarily involve cenſorioufneſs; ſo far from it, it is fair to diſcuſs whatever ſeems to be doubtful, and I ſhall be glad to hear your ladyſhip's objections."

"Well then," replied ſhe, in the moſt modeſt tone and accent, "with all my reverence for Dr. Barlow, I thought him a little unreaſonable in ſeeming to expect univerſal goodneſs from creatures whom he yet inſiſted were fallen creatures."

"Perhaps, Madam," ſaid Mr. Stanley, "you miſtook his meaning, for he appeared to me perfectly conſiſtent, not only with himſelf, but with his invariable rule and guide, the ſcriptures. Sanctification, will you allow me to uſe ſo ſerious a word, however imperfect, muſt be univerſal. It is not the improvement of any one faculty, or quality or temper, which divines mean, when they ſay we are renewed in part, ſo much as that the change is not perfect, the holineſs is not complete in *any* part, or power, or faculty,

faculty, though progreſſive in all. He who earneſtly deſires an univerſal victory over ſin, knows which of his evil diſpoſitions or affections it is that is yet unſubdued. This rebellious enemy, he vigilantly ſets himſelf to watch againſt, to ſtruggle with, and, through divine grace, to conquer. The teſt of his ſincerity does not ſo much conſiſt in avoiding many faults to which he has no temptation, as in conquering that one to which his natural bent and bias forcibly impel him."

Lady Belfield ſaid, "But is it not impoſſible to bring every part of our nature under this abſolute dominion? Suppoſe a man is very paſſionate, and yet very charitable; would you look upon that perſon to be in a dangerous ſtate?"

"It is not my province, Madam, to decide," replied Mr. Stanley. 'God,' as Biſhop Sanderſon ſays, 'reſerves this *royalty* to himſelf of being the ſearcher of hearts.' I cannot judge how far he reſiſts anger, nor what are his ſecret ſtruggles againſt

againſt it. God, who expects not perfection, expects ſincerity. Though complete, unmixed goodneſs is not to be attained in this imperfect ſtate, yet the earneſt deſire after it is the only ſure criterion of the ſincerity we profeſs. If the man you allude to does not watch and pray, and ſtrive againſt the paſſion of anger, which is his natural infirmity, I ſhould doubt, whether any of his affections were really renewed; and I ſhould fear that his charity was rather a mere habitual feeling, though a moſt amiable one, than a Chriſtian grace. He indulges in charity, becauſe it is a conſtitutional bias, and coſts him nothing. He indulges in paſſion, becauſe it is a natural bias alſo; and to ſet about a victory over it would coſt him a great deal. This ſhould put him on a ſtrict ſelf-examination; when he would probably find that, while he gives the uncontrouled reins to any one wrong inclination, his religion, even when he does right things, is queſtionable. True religion is ſeated in the heart: that is the centre from which all the lines of right prac-

practice muſt diverge. It is the great duty and chief buſineſs of a Chriſtian, to labour to make all his affections, with all their motives, tendencies, and operations, ſubſervient to the word and will of God. His irregular paſſions, which are ſtill apt to ſtart out into diſorder, will require vigilance to the end. He muſt not think all is ſafe, becauſe the more tractable ones are not rebellious; but he may entertain a cheerful hope, when thoſe which were once rebellious are become tractable."

"I feel the importance of what you ſay," returned Lady Belfield; "but I feel alſo my utter inability to ſet about it."

"My dear Madam," ſaid Mr. Stanley, "this is the beſt and moſt ſalutary feeling you can have. That very conſciouſneſs of inſufficiency will, I truſt, drive you to the fountain of all ſtrength and power; it will quicken your faith, and animate your prayer; faith, which is the habitual principle of confidence in God; and prayer which is the exerciſe of that principle toward him who is the object of it."

"But

"But Dr. Barlow," said Lady Belfield, "was so discouraging! he seemed to intimate, as if the conflict of a Christian with sin must be as lasting as his life; whereas I had hoped that victory once obtained, was obtained for ever."

"The *strait gate*," replied Mr. Stanley, "is only the entrance of religion; the *narrow way* is a continued course. The Christian life, my dear Lady Belfield, is not a point but a progress. It is precisely in the race of christianity as in the race of human glory. Julius Cæsar and St. Paul describe their respective warfares in nearly the same terms.—*We should count nothing done while any thing remains undone**, says the Warrior.—*Not counting myself to have attained—forgetting the things which are behind, and pressing forward to those which are before*, says the Apostle. And it is worth remarking, that they both made the disqualifying observation after attainments almost incredible. As there

* Nil actum reputans dum quid supereſſet agendum.
LUCAN.

was

was no being a hero by any idler way, ſo there is no being a Chriſtian by any eaſier road. The neceſſity of purſuit is the ſame in both caſes, though the objects purſued differ as widely as the vanities of time from the riches of eternity.

"Do not think, my dear Madam," added Mr. Stanley, "that I am erecting myſelf into a cenſor, much leſs into a model. The corruptions which I lament, I participate. The deficiencies which I deplore, I feel. Not only when I look abroad am I perſuaded of the general prevalence of evil by what I ſee; but when I look into my own heart, my conviction is confirmed by what I experience. I am conſcious, not merely of frailties, but of ſins. I will not hypocritically accuſe myſelf of groſs offences, which I have no temptation to commit, and from the commiſſion of which, motives inferior to religion would preſerve me. But I am continually humbled in detecting mixed motives in almoſt all I do. —Such ſtrugglings of pride with my endeavours after humility! Such irreſolution in

in my firmeſt purpoſes! So much imperfection in my beſt actions! So much want of ſimplicity in my pureſt deſigns! Such freſh ſhoots of ſelfiſhneſs where I had hoped the plant itſelf had been eradicated! Such frequent deadneſs in duty! Such coldneſs in my affection! Such infirmity of will! Such proneneſs to earth in my higheſt aſpirations after heaven! All theſe you ſee would hardly make, in the eyes of thoſe who want Chriſtian diſcernment, very groſs ſins; yet they prove demonſtrably the root of ſin in the heart, and the infection of nature tainting my beſt reſolves."

"The true Chriſtian," ſaid I, when Mr. Stanley had done ſpeaking, "extracts humility from the very circumſtance which raiſes pride in the irreligious. The ſight of any enormity in another makes the mere moraliſt proud that he is exempt from it, while the religious man is humbled from a view of the ſinfulneſs of that nature he partakes, a nature which admits of ſuch exceſſes, and from which exceſſes he knows that he himſelf is preſerved by

divine

divine grace alone. I have often obſerved that compariſon is the aliment of pride in the worldly man, and of ſelf-abaſement in the Chriſtian."

Poor Lady Belfield looked comforted on finding that her friend Mr. Stanley was not quite ſo perfect as ſhe had feared. "Happy are thoſe," exclaimed ſhe, looking at Lucilla, "the innocence of whoſe lives recommends them to the divine favour."

"Innocence," replied Mr. Stanley, "can never be pleaded as a ground of acceptance, becauſe the thing does not exiſt. Innocence excludes the neceſſity of repentance, and where there is no ſin, there can be no need of a Saviour. Whatever therefore we may be in compariſon with others, innocence can afford no plea for our acceptance, without anulling the great plan of our redemption."

"One thing puzzles me," ſaid Lady Belfield. "The moſt worthleſs people I converſe with deny the doctrine of human corruption, a doctrine the truth of which one ſhould ſuppoſe their own feelings muſt con-

firm; while thoſe few excellent perſons, who almoſt ſeem to have eſcaped it, inſiſt the moſt peremptorily on its reality. But if it be really true, ſurely the mercies of God are ſo great, that he will overlook the frailties of ſuch weak and erring mortals. So gracious a Saviour will not exact ſuch rigorous obedience from creatures ſo infirm."

"Let not what I am going to ſay, my dear Lady Belfield," replied Mr. Stanley, "offend you; the correctneſs of your conduct exempts you from any particular application. But there are too many Chriſtians, who while they ſpeak with reverence of Chriſt as the Saviour of ſinners, do not enough conſider him as a deliverer from ſin. They regard him rather as having lowered the requiſitions of the law, and exonerated his followers from the neceſſity of that ſtrictneſs of life which they view as a burthenſome part of religion. From this burthen they flatter themſelves it was the chief object of the Goſpel to deliver them; and from this ſuppoſed deliverance it is, that they chiefly conſider it as a merciful

merciful diſpenſation. A cheap Chriſtianity, of which we can acquit ourſelves by a general recognition, and a few ſtated obſervances, which requires no ſacrifices of the will, nor rectification of the life, is, I aſſure you, the prevailing ſyſtem; the religion of that numerous claſs who like to ſave appearances, and to decline realities; who expect every thing hereafter, while they reſolve to give up nothing here; but who keep heaven in view as a ſnug reverſion after they ſhall have ſqueezed out of this world, to the very laſt dregs and droppings, all it has to give."

Lady Belfield with great modeſty replied, "Indeed I am aſhamed to have ſaid ſo much upon a topic on which I am unable and unuſed to debate. Sir John only ſmiles and looks reſolved not to help me out. Believe me, however, my dear Sir, that what I have ſaid proceeds not from preſumption, but from an earneſt deſire of being ſet right. I will only venture to offer one more obſervation on the afternoon's ſermon.

Dr. Barlow, to my great ſurpriſe, ſpoke of the death of Chriſt as exhibiting *practical* leſſons. Now though I have always conſidered it in a general way, as the cauſe of our ſalvation, yet its preceptive and moral benefits, I muſt confeſs, do not appear to me at all obvious."

"I conceive," replied Mr. Stanley, "our deliverance from the puniſhment incurred by ſin, to be one great end and object of the death of our Redeemer; but I am very far from conſidering this as the only benefit attending it. I conceive it to be moſt abundant in inſtruction, and the ſtrongeſt poſſible incentive to practical goodneſs, and that in a great variety of ways. The death of our Redeemer ſhews us the infinite value of our ſouls, by ſhewing the ineſtimable price paid for them, and thus leads us to more diligence in ſecuring their eternal felicity. It is calculated to inſpire us with an unfeigned hatred of ſin, and more eſpecially to convince us of God's hatred to that, for the pardon of which ſuch a

ſacrifice was deemed neceſſary. Now if it actually produces ſuch an effect, it conſequently ſtimulates us to repentance, and to an increaſing dread of violating thoſe engagements which we have ſo often made, to lead a better life. Then the contemplation of this ſtupenduous circumſtance will tend to fill our hearts with ſuch a ſenſe of gratitude and obedience, as will be likely to preſerve us from relapſing into freſh offences. Again—can any motive operate ſo powerfully on us towards producing univerſal charity and forgiveneſs? Whatever promotes our love to God will diſpoſe us to an increaſed love for our fellow-creatures. We cannot converſe with any man, we cannot receive a kindneſs from any man, nay, we cannot receive an injury from any man, for whom the Redeemer has not died. The remembrance of the ſufferings which procured pardon for the greateſt offences, has a natural tendency to lead us to forgive ſmall ones."

Lady Belfield ſaid, "I had not indeed imagined there were any practical uſes in an

event to which I had been, however, accuſtomed to look with reverence as an atonement for ſin."

"Of theſe practical effects," replied Mr. Stanley, "I will only farther obſerve, that all human conſiderations put together cannot ſo powerfully inſpire us with an indifference to the vanities of life, and the allurements of unhallowed pleaſures. No human motive can be ſo efficacious in ſuſtaining the heart under trials, and reconciling it to afflictions. For what trials and afflictions do not ſink into nothing in compariſon with the ſufferings attending that auguſt event, from which we derive this ſupport? The contemplation of this ſacrifice alſo degrades wealth, debaſes power, annihilates ambition. We riſe from this contemplation with a mind prepared to bear with the infirmities, to relieve the wants, to forgive the unkindneſſes of men. We extract from it a more humbling ſenſe of ourſelves, a more ſubdued ſpirit, a more ſober contempt of whatever the world calls great, than all the lectures of ancient

ancient philoſophy, or the teachers of modern morals ever inſpired."

During this little debate Sir John maintained the moſt invincible ſilence. His countenance bore not the leaſt mark of ill humour or impatience, but it was ſerious and thoughtful; except when his wife got into any little difficulty; he then encouraged her by an affectionate ſmile, but liſtened like a man who has not quite made up his mind, yet thinks the ſubject too important to be diſmiſſed without a fair and candid hearing.

CHAP. XXV.

WHILE we were at breakfaſt next morning a ſweet little gay girl flew into the room almoſt breathleſs with joy; and running to her mother, preſented her with a beautiful noſegay.

"O, I ſee you were the induſtrious girl laſt week, Kate," ſaid Mrs. Stanley, embracing her, and admiring the flowers. Lady Belfield looked inquiſitively. "It is an invention of Lucilla's," ſaid the mother, "that the little one who performs beſt in the ſchool-room, inſtead of having any reward which may excite vanity or ſenſuality, ſhall be taught to gratify a better feeling, by being allowed to preſent her mother with a noſegay of the fineſt flowers, which it is reward enough to ſee worn at dinner, to which ſhe is always admitted when there is no company."

"Oh

"Oh pray do not conſider us as company; pray let Kate dine with us to day," ſaid Lady Belfield; Mrs. Stanley bowed her aſſent and went on. "But this is not all. The flowers they preſent, they alſo raiſe. I went rather too far, when I ſaid that no vanity was excited; they are vain enough of their carnations, and each is eager to produce the largeſt. In this competition, however, the vanity is not perſonal. Lucilla has ſome ſkill in raiſing flowers, each girl has a ſubordinate poſt under her. Their father often treats them with half a day's work, and then they all treat me with tea and cakes in the honey-ſuckle arbour of their own planting, which is called Lucilla's bower. It would be hard to ſay whether parents or children moſt enjoy theſe happy holidays."

At dinner Mrs. Stanley appeared with her noſegay in a large knot of ribbons, which was eyed with no ſmall complacency by little Kate. I obſerved that Lucilla, who uſed to manifeſt much pleaſure in the con-

verſation after dinner, was beckoned out of the room by Phœbe, as ſoon as it was over. I felt uneaſy at an abſence, to which I had not been accuſtomed; but the cauſe was explained, when at ſix o'clock, Kate, who was the queen of the day, was ſent to invite us to drink tea in Lucilla's bower; we inſtantly obeyed the ſummons.

"I knew nothing of this," ſaid the delighted mother, while we were all admiring the elegant arrangements of this little fete. The purple clematis twiſting its flexile branches with thoſe of the pale woodbine, formed a ſweet and fragrant canopy to the arched bower, while the flowery tendrils hung down on all ſides. Large bunches of roſes, intermixed with the ſilver ſtars of the jeſſamine, were ſtuck into the moſs on the inſide as a temporary decoration only. The fineſt plants had been brought from the Green-houſe for the occaſion. It was a delicious evening, and the little fairy feſtivity, together with the flitting about of the airy ſpirits which had prepared it, was abſolutely

ſolutely enchanting. Sir John, always poetical, exclaimed in rapture,

"Heſperian fables true,
If true, here only."

I needed not this quotation to bring the garden of Eden to my mind, for Lucilla preſided. Phœbe was all alive. The other little ones had decorated Kate's flaxen hair with a wreath of woodbines. They ſung two or three baby ſtanzas, which they had compoſed among themſelves, in which Kate was complimented as queen of the fete. The youngeſt daughter of Lady Aſton, who was about Kate's age, and two little girls of Dr. Barlow's, were of the children's party on the green. The elder ſiſters of both families made part of the company within.

When we were all ſeated in our enchanting bower, and drinking our tea, at which we had no other attendant than the little Hebes themſelves, I aſked Kate how it happened, that ſhe ſeemed to be diſtinguiſhed on this occaſion from her little

ſiſters.

ſiſters. "Oh, Sir," ſaid ſhe, "it is becauſe it is my birth-day. I am eight years old to-day. I gave up all my gilt books, with pictures, this day twelve month, and to-day I give up all my little ſtory books, and I am now going to read ſuch books as men and women read."

She then ran to her companions, who ranged themſelves round a turf ſeat at a little diſtance before us, to which was transferred a profuſion of cakes and fruit from the bower. While they were devouring them, I turned to Mr. Stanley, and deſired an explanation of Kate's ſpeech.

"I make," ſaid he, "the renouncing their baby books a kind of epocha, and by thus diſtinctly marking the period, they never think of returning back to them. We have in our domeſtic plan, ſeveral of theſe artificial diviſions of life. Theſe little celebrations are æras, that we uſe as marking poſts, from which we ſet out on ſome new courſe."

"But

"But as to Kate's books," ſaid Lady Belfield? "We have," replied Mr. Stanley, "too many elementary books. They are read too much and too long. The youthful mind, which was formerly ſick from inanition, is now in danger from a plethora.

"Much however will depend on capacity and diſpoſition. A child of ſlower parts may be indulged till nine years old with books which a lively genius will look down upon at ſeven. A girl of talents *will* read. To *her* no excitement is wanting. The natural appetite is a ſufficient incentive. The leſs brilliant child requires the allurement of lighter books. She wants encouragement as much as the other requires reſtraint."

"But don't you think," ſaid Lady Belfield, "that they are of great uſe in attracting children to love reading?" "Doubtleſs they are," ſaid Mr. Stanley. "The misfortune is, that the ſtimulant uſed to attract at firſt, muſt be not only continued

but

but heightened, to keep up the attraction. Theſe books are novels in miniature, and the exceſs of them will lead to the want of novels at full length. The early uſe of ſavoury diſhes is not uſually followed by an appetite for plain food. To the taſte thus pampered, hiſtory becomes dry, grammar laborious, and religion dull.

"My wife who was left to travel through the wide expanſe of Univerſal Hiſtory, and the dreary deſerts of Rapin and Mezerai, is, I will venture to aſſert, more competently ſkilled in ancient, French, and Engliſh hiſtory, than any of the girls who have been fed, or rather ſtarved on extracts and abridgements. I mean not to recommend the two laſt named authors for very young people. They are dry and tedious, and children in our days have opportunities of acquiring the ſame knowledge with leſs labour. We have brighter, I wiſh I could ſay ſafer lights. Still fact, and not wit, is the leading object of hiſtory.

"Mrs. Stanley ſays, that the very tediouſneſs

ouſneſs of her hiſtorians had a good effect; they were a ballaſt to her levity, a diſcipline to her mind, of which ſhe has felt the benefit in her ſubſequent life.

"But to return to the maſs of children's books. The too great profuſion of them protracts the imbecility of childhood. They arreſt the underſtanding inſtead of advancing it. They give forwardneſs without ſtrength. They hinder the mind from making vigorous ſhoots, teach it to ſtoop when it ſhould ſoar, and to contract when it ſhould expand. Yet I allow that many of them are delightfully amuſing, and to a certain degree inſtructive. But they muſt not be uſed as the baſis of inſtruction, and but ſparingly uſed at all as refreſhment from labour."

"They inculcate morality and good actions ſurely," ſaid Lady Belfield. "It is true," replied Mr. Stanley, "but they often inculcate them on a worldly principle, and rather teach the pride of virtue, and the profit of virtue, than point out the motive of virtue, and the principle of ſin. They reprobate

probate bad actions as evil and injurious to others, but not as an offence againſt the Almighty.—Whereas the Bible comes with a plain, ſtraight-forward, ſimple, but powerful principle—'How ſhall I do this great wickedneſs and ſin againſt God?' 'Againſt THEE, THEE only have I ſinned, and done this evil in THY ſight.'

"Even children ſhould be taught that when a man has committed the greateſt poſſible crime againſt his fellow-creature, ſtill the offence againſt God is what will ſtrike a true penitent with the moſt deep remorſe. All morality which is not drawn from this ſcriptural ſource, is weak, defective, and hollow. Theſe entertaining authors ſeldom ground their ſtories on any intimation that human nature is corrupt; that the young reader is helpleſs and wants aſſiſtance; that he is guilty and wants pardon."

"Surely, my dear Mr. Stanley," ſaid Lady Belfield, "though I do not object to the truth and reaſonableneſs of any thing you have ſaid, I cannot think that theſe things

things can poſſibly be made intelligible to children."

"The framers of our catechiſm, Madam, thought otherwiſe," replied Mr. Stanley. "The catechiſm was written for children, and contains all the ſeeds and principles of chriſtianity for men. It evidently requires much explanation, much developement; ſtill it furniſhes a wide and important field for colloquial inſtruction, without which young perſons can by no means underſtand a compoſition ſo admirable, but ſo condenſed. The catechiſm ſpeaks expreſsly of 'a death unto ſin'—of 'a new birth unto righteouſneſs'—of 'being born in ſin'—of being 'the children of wrath'—of becoming 'the children of grace'—of 'forſaking ſin by repentance'—of 'believing the promiſes of God by faith.' Now while children are ſtudying theſe great truths in the catechiſm, they are probably, at the ſame time, almoſt conſtantly reading ſome of thoſe entertaining ſtories which are grounded and built on a quite oppoſite principle,

and

and do not even imply the exiſtence of any ſuch fundamental truths."

"Surely," interrupted Lady Belfield, "you would not have theſe ſerious doctrines brought forward in ſtory books?"

"By no means, Madam," replied Mr. Stanley, "but I will venture to aſſert that even ſtory books ſhould not be founded on a principle directly *contradictory* to them, nay totally *ſubverſive* of them. The Arabian Nights, and other oriental books of fable, though looſe and faulty in many reſpects, yet have always a reference to the religion of the country. Nothing is introduced againſt the law of Mahomet; nothing ſubverſive of the opinions of a Muſſulman. I do not quarrel with books for having *no* religion, but for having a *falſe* religion. A book which in nothing oppoſes the principle of the Bible I would be far from calling a bad book, though the Bible was never named in it."

Lady Belfield obſerved, "That ſhe was ſorry to ſay her children found religious

ſtudies

ſtudies very dry and tireſome; though ſhe took great pains, and made them learn by heart a multitude of queſtions and anſwers, a variety of catechiſms and explanations, and the beſt abridgments of the Bible."

"My dear Lady Belfield," replied Mr. Stanley, "you have fully accounted for the dryneſs and dulneſs of which you complain. Give them the *Bible itſelf*. I never yet knew a child who did not delight in the Bible hiſtories, and who would not deſire to hear them again and again. From the hiſtories, Mrs. Stanley and I proceed with them to the parables; and from them to the miracles, and a few of the moſt ſtriking prophecies. When they have acquired a good deal of this deſultory knowledge, we begin to weave the parts into a whole. The little girl who had the honour of dining with you to-day, has begun this morning to read the ſcriptures with her mother ſyſtematically. We ſhall ſoon open to her ſome-

thing of the *ſcheme* of Chriſtianity, and explain how thoſe miracles and prophecies confirm the truth of that religion in which ſhe is to be more fully inſtructed.

"Upon their hiſtorical knowledge, which they acquire by picking out the moſt intereſting ſtories, we endeavour to ground principles to enlighten their minds, and precepts to influence their conduct. With the genuine language of ſcripture I have taken particular care they ſhall be well acquainted, by digging for the ore in its native bed. While they have been ſtudying the ſtories, their minds have at the ſame time been imbued with the impreſſive phraſeology of ſcripture. I make a great point of this, having often ſeen this uſeful impreſſion effectually prevented by a multitude of ſubſidiary hiſtories, and explanations, which too much ſuperſede the uſe of the original text.

"Only obſerve," continued he, "what divine ſentiments, what holy precepts, what devout ejaculations, what ſtrokes of

ſelf-abaſement, what ſlights of gratitude, what tranſports of praiſe, what touches of penitential ſorrow, are found compriſed in ſome one ſhort ſentence woven into almoſt every part of the hiſtorical ſcriptures! Obſerve this, and then confeſs what a pity it is that children ſhould be commonly ſet to read the hiſtory in a meagre abridgment, ſtripped of thoſe gems with which the original is ſo richly inlaid! Theſe hiſtories and expoſitions become very uſeful afterwards to young people who are thoroughly converſant with the Bible itſelf."

Sir John obſerved, that he had been ſtruck with the remarkable *diſintereſtedneſs* of Mr. Stanley's daughters, and their indifference to things about which moſt children were ſo eager. "Selfiſhneſs," ſaid Mr. Stanley, "is the hydra we are perpetually combating; but the monſter has ſo much vitality, that new heads ſpring up as faſt as the old ones are cut off. *To counteract ſelfiſhneſs, that in-*

born, inbred miſchief, I hold to be the great art of education. Education, therefore, cannot be adequately carried on except by thoſe who are deeply convinced of the doctrine of human corruption. This evil principle, as it ſhews itſelf early, muſt be early lopped, or the rapid ſhoots it makes, will, as your favourite Eve obſerves,

"Soon mock our ſcant manuring."

"This counteraction," continued Mr. Stanley, "is not like an art or a ſcience, which is to be taken up at ſet times, and laid aſide till the allotted period of inſtruction returns; but as the evil ſhews itſelf at all times, and in all ſhapes, the *whole force* of inſtruction is to be bent againſt it. Mrs. Stanley and I endeavour that not one reward we beſtow, not one gratification we afford, ſhall be calculated to promote it. Gratifications children ought to have. The appetites and inclinations ſhould be reaſonably indulged. We

We only are cautious not to employ them as *the instruments of recompence*, which would look as if we valued them highly, and thought them a fit remuneration for merit. I would rather shew a little indulgence to ſenſuality *as* ſenſuality, than make it the reward of goodneſs, which ſeems to be the common way. While I indulged the appetite of a child, I would never hold out that indulgence which I granted to the loweſt, the animal part of his nature, as a payment for the exertion of his mental or moral faculties."

"You have one great advantage," ſaid Sir John, "and I thank God it is the ſame in Cavendiſh-Square, that you and Mrs. Stanley draw evenly together. Nothing impedes domeſtic regulations ſo effectually as where parents, from difference of ſentiment, ill-humour, or bad judgment obſtruct each other's plans, or where one parent makes the other inſignificant in the eyes of their children."

"Mr. Reynolds," replied Mr. Stanley, "a friend of mine in this neighbourhood, is in this very predicament. To the mother's weakneſs the father's temperate diſcipline ſeems cruelty. She is perpetually blaming him before the children for ſetting them to their books. Her attentions are divided between their health, which is perfect, and their pleaſure, which is obſtructed by her fooliſh zeal to promote it, far more than by his prudent reſtrictions. Whatever the father helps them to at table, the mother takes from them leſt it ſhould make them ſick. What he forbids is always the very thing which is good for them. She is much more afraid however of over-loading their memories than their ſtomachs. Reading, ſhe ſays, will ſpoil the girls' eyes, ſtooping to write will ruin their cheſts, and working will make them round ſhouldered. If the boys run, they will have fevers; if they jump, they will ſprain their ancles; if they play at cricket, a blow may kill them;

if

if they ſwim, they will be drowned, the ſhallowneſs of the ſtream is no argument of ſafety.

"Poor Reynolds' life is one continued ſtruggle between his ſenſe of duty to his children, and his complaiſance to his wife. If he carries his point, it is at the expence of his peace; if he relaxes, as he commonly does, his children are the victims. He is at length brought to ſubmit his excellent judgment to her feeble mind, leſt his oppoſition ſhould hurt her health; and he has the mortification of ſeeing his children trained as if they had nothing but bodies.

"To the wretched education of Mrs. Reynolds herſelf all this miſchief may be attributed; for ſhe is not a bad, though an ignorant woman; and having been harſhly treated by her own parents, ſhe fell into the vulgar error of vulgar minds, that of ſuppoſing the oppoſite of wrong muſt neceſſarily be right. As ſhe found that being perpetually contradicted had

made herſelf miſerable, ſhe concluded that never being contradicted at all would make her children happy. The event has anſwered as might have been foreſeen. Never was a more diſcontented, diſagreeing, troubleſome family. The gratification of one want inſtantly creates a new one. And it is only when they are quite worn out with having done nothing, that they take refuge in their books as leſs wearieſome than idleneſs."

Sir John, turning to Lady Belfield, ſaid in a very tender tone, "My dear Caroline, this ſtory, in its principal feature, does not apply to us. We concur completely, it is true, but I fear we concur by being both wrong; we both err by exceſſive indulgence. As to the caſe in point, while children are young, they may perhaps lean to the parent who ſpoils them, but I have never yet ſeen an inſtance of young perſons, where the parents differed, who did not afterwards diſcover a much ſtronger affection for the one, who had

had reaſonably reſtrained them, than for the other, whoſe blind indulgence had at once diminiſhed her importance and their own reverence."

I obſerved to Mr. Stanley that as he had ſo noble a library, and wiſhed to inſpire his children with the love of literature, I was ſurpriſed to ſee their apartment ſo ſlenderly provided with books.

"This is the age of exceſs in every thing," replied he; "nothing is a gratification of which the want has not been previouſly felt. The wiſhes of children are all ſo anticipated, that they never experience the pleaſure excited by wanting and waiting. Of their initiatory books they *muſt* have a pretty copious ſupply. But as to books of entertainment or inſtruction of a higher kind, I never allow them to poſſeſs one of their own, till they have attentively read and improved by it; this gives them a kind of title to it; and that deſire of property ſo natural to human creatures, I think ſtimulates them in

in diſpatching books which are in themſelves a little dry. Expectation with them, as with men, quickens deſire, while poſſeſſion deadens it."

By this time the children had exhauſted all the refreſhments ſet before them, and had retreated to a little farther diſtance, where, without diſturbing us, they freely enjoyed their innocent gambols—playing, ſinging, laughing, dancing, reciting verſes, trying which could puzzle the other in the names of plants, of which they pulled ſingle leaves to encreaſe the difficulty, all ſucceeded each other. Lady Belfield looking conſciouſly at me, ſaid "theſe are the creatures whom I fooliſhly ſuſpected of being made miſerable by reſtraint, and gloomy through want of indulgence."

"After long experience," ſaid Mr. Stanley, "I will venture to pronounce, that not all the anxious cutting out of pleaſure, not all the coſtly indulgences which wealth can procure, not all the contrivances of inventive

inventive man for his darling youthful offspring, can find out an amuſement ſo pure, ſo natural, ſo cheap, ſo rational, ſo healthful, I had almoſt ſaid ſo religious, as that unbought pleaſure connected with a garden."

Kate and Celia, who had for ſome time been peeping into the bower, in order to catch an interval in the converſation, as ſoon as they found our attention diſengaged ſtole in among us, each took the fond father by a hand, and led to the turf ſeat. Phœbe preſented him a book which he opened, and out of it read with infinite humour, grace and gaiety, THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN. This it ſeems was a pleaſure to which they had been led to look forward for ſome time, but which, in honour of Kate, had been purpoſely withheld till this memorable day.

His little auditors, who grouped themſelves around him on the graſs, were nearly convulſed with laughter, nor were the tenants of the bower much leſs delighted:

As

As we walked into the houſe, Mr. Stanley ſaid, "whenever I read to my children a light and gay compoſition, which I often do, I generally take care it ſhall be the work of ſome valuable author, to whoſe writings this ſhall be a pleaſant and a tempting prelude. What child of ſpirit who hears John Gilpin will not long to be thought old and wiſe enough to read the "Taſk?" The remembrance of the infant rapture will give a predilection for the poet. Deſiring to keep their ſtandard high, I accuſtom them to none but good writers, in every ſenſe of the word; by this means they will be leſs likely to ſtoop to ordinary ones when they ſhall hereafter come to chuſe for themſelves."

Lady Belfield regretted to me that ſhe had not brought ſome of her children to the Grove: "To confeſs a diſgraceful truth," ſaid ſhe, "I was afraid they would have been moped to death; and to confeſs another truth ſtill more diſgraceful to my own authority, my indulgence has been ſo inju-

injudicious, and I have maintained ſo little control, that I durſt not bring ſome of them, for fear of putting the reſt out of humour; I am now in a ſchool, where I truſt I may learn to acquire firmneſs, without any diminution of fondneſs."

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVI.

THE next morning Mr. Stanley propoſed that we ſhould pay a viſit to ſome of his neighbours. He and Sir John Belfield rode on horſeback, and I had the honour of attending the ladies in the ſociable. Lady Belfield, who was now become deſirous of improving on her own too relaxed domeſtic ſyſtem, by the experience of Mrs. Stanley, told her how much ſhe admired the cheerful obedience of her children. She ſaid, "ſhe did not ſo much wonder to ſee them ſo good, but ſhe owned ſhe was ſurpriſed to ſee them ſo happy."

"I know not," replied Mrs. Stanley, "whether the increaſed inſubordination of children is owing to the new ſchool of philoſophy and politics, but it ſeems to me to make part of the ſyſtem. When I go ſometimes to ſtay with a friend in town to do buſineſs,

ſineſs, ſhe is always making apologies that ſhe cannot go out with me—'her daughters want the coach.'—If I aſk leave to ſee the friends who call on me in ſuch a room,—'her daughters have company there, or they want the room for their muſic, or it is preparing for the children's ball in the evening.'—If a meſſenger is required,—'her daughters want the footmen.' There certainly prevails a ſpirit of independence, a revolutionary ſpirit, a ſeparation from the parent ſtate. IT IS THE CHILDREN'S WORLD."

"You remind me, Madam," ſaid I, "of an old courtier, who being aſked by Louis XV. which age he preferred, his own or the preſent, replied, 'Sire, I paſſed my youth in reſpecting old age, and I find I muſt now paſs my old age in reſpecting children."

"In ſome other houſes," ſaid Mrs. Stanley, "where we viſit, beſides that of poor Mr. Reynolds, the children ſeem to have all the accommodations; and I have obſerved that the convenience and comfort of the father is but a ſubordinate conſideration.

The

The reſpectful terms of addreſs are nearly baniſhed from the vocabulary of children, and the ſomewhat too orderly manner which once prevailed, is ſuperſeded by an incivility, a roughneſs, a want of attention, which is ſurely not better than the harmleſs formality which it has driven out."

Juſt as ſhe ſaid this, we ſtopt at Mr. Reynolds' gate; neither he nor his lady was at home. Mr. Stanley, who wiſhed to ſhew us a fine reach of the river from the drawing-room window, deſired the ſervant to ſhew us into it. There we beheld a curious illuſtration of what we had heard. In the ample bow-window lay a confuſed heap of the glittering ſpoils of the moſt expenſive toys. Before the rich ſilk chairs knelt two of the children in the act of rapidly demoliſhing their fine painted play-things; "others apart ſat on the *floor* retired," and more deliberately employed in picking to pieces their little gaudy works of art. A pretty girl who had a beautiful wax doll on her lap, almoſt as big as herſelf, was pulling

out its eyes, that ſhe might ſee how they were put in. Another, weary of this coſtly baby, was making a little doll of rags. A turbulent-looking boy was tearing out the parchment from a handſome new drum, that he might ſee, as he told us, where the noiſe came from. Theſe I forgave, they had meaning in their miſchief.

Another having kicked about a whole little gilt library, was ſitting, with the decorated pages torn aſunder at his feet, reading a little dirty penny book, which the kitchen-maid had bought of a hawker at the door. The Perſian carpet was ſtrewed with the broken limbs of a painted horſe, almoſt as large as a poney, while the diſcontented little maſter was riding aſtride on a long rough ſtick. A bigger boy, after having broken the pannels of a fine gilt coach, we ſaw afterwards in the court-yard, nailing together a few dirty bits of ragged elm boards, to make himſelf a wheel-barrow.

"Not only the diſciple of the faſtidious Jean Jacques," exclaimed I, "but the found

votary of truth and reaſon, muſt triumph at ſuch an inſtance of the ſatiety of riches, and the wearineſs of ignorance and idleneſs. One ſuch practical inſtance of the inſufficiency of affluence to *beſtow* the pleaſures which induſtry muſt *buy*;—one ſuch actual exemplification of the folly of ſuppoſing that injudicious profuſion and miſtaken fondneſs can ſupply that pleaſure which muſt be worked out before it can be enjoyed, is worth a whole folio of argument or exhortation."—The ill-bred little flock paid no attention to us, and only returned a rude 'n—o' or 'ye—s' to our queſtions.

"Caroline," ſaid Sir John, "theſe painted ruins afford a good leſſon for us. We muſt deſire our rich uncles and our generous god-mothers to make an alteration in their preſents, if they cannot be prevailed upon to withhold them."

"It is a ſad miſtake," ſaid Mr. Stanley, "to ſuppoſe that youth wants to be ſo inceſſantly amuſed. They want not pleaſures to be chalked out for them. Lay a few

cheap

cheap and coarſe materials in their way, and let their own buſy inventions be ſuffered to work. They have abundant pleaſure in the mere freſhneſs and novelty of life, its unbroken health, its elaſtic ſpirit, its verſatile temper, and its ever-new reſources."

"So it appears, Stanley," ſaid Sir John, "when I look at your little groupe of girls, recluſes as they are called. How many cheap, yet lively pleaſures do they ſeem to enjoy!—their ſucceſſive occupations, their books, their animating exerciſe, their charitable rounds, their ardent friendſhips, the ſocial table at which the elder ones are companions, not mutes; the ever-varying pleaſures of their garden,

Increaſing virtue and approving heaven."

While we were ſitting with Lady Aſton, on whom we next called, Mr. Stanley ſuddenly exclaimed, "The Miſs Flams are coming up the gravel walk!" Lady Aſton looked vexed, but correcting herſelf ſaid, "Mr. Stanley, we owe this viſit to you, or rather to your friend," bowing to me;

"they ſaw your carriage ſtop here, or they would not have done ſo dull a thing as to have called on me."

Theſe new gueſts preſented a new ſcene, very uncongenial to the timid and tranquil ſpirit of the amiable hoſteſs. There ſeemed to be a conteſt between the ſiſters, who ſhould be moſt eloquent, moſt loud or moſt inquiſitive. They eagerly attacked me all at once, as ſuppoſing me to be overflowing with intelligence from the metropolis, a place which they not only believed to contain excluſively all that was worth ſeeing, but all that was worth hearing. The reſt of the world they conſidered as a barren wilderneſs, of which the hungry inhabitants could only be kept from ſtarving, by ſuch meagre aliment as the occaſional reports of its pleaſures, faſhions, and anecdotes, which might now and then be conveyed by ſome ſtray traveller, might furniſh.

"It is ſo ſtrange to us," ſaid Miſs Bell, "and ſo monſtrouſly dull and vulgar, to be in the country at this time of the year, that we don't know what to do with ourſelves.

"As

"As to the time of year, Madam," said I, "if ever one would wish to be in the country at all, surely this month is the point of perfection. The only immoral thing with which I could ever charge our excellent Sovereign is that he was born in June, and has thus furnished his fashionable subjects with a loyal pretence for encountering 'the fin and sea-coal of London,' to borrow Will Honeycomb's phrase, in the finest month of the twelve. But where that is the real motive with one, it is the pretence of a thousand."

"How can you be so shocking?" said she, "but papa is really grown so cross and so stingy, as to prevent our going to town at all these last two or three years; and for so mean a reason that I am ashamed to tell you." Out of politeness I did not press to know; I needed not, for she was resolved I should not 'burst in ignorance.'

She went on—"Do you know he pretends that times are hard, and public difficulties increasing; and he declares, that

whatever privations we endure, government muſt be ſupported: ſo that he ſays, it is right to draw in, in the only way in which he can do it honeſtly; I am ſure it is not doing it creditably. Did you ever hear any thing ſo ſhabby?" "Shabby, Madam," replied I; "I honour a gentleman who has integrity enough to do a right thing, and good ſenſe enough not to be aſhamed to own it."

"Yes, but papa need not. The ſteward declares, if he would only raiſe his tenants a very little, he would have more than enough; but papa is inflexible. He ſays my brother muſt do as he pleaſes when he comes to the eſtate, but that he himſelf promiſed when he came into poſſeſſion, that he would never raiſe the rents, and that he will never be worſe than his word." As I could not find in my heart to join in abuſing a gentleman for reſolving never to be worſe than his word, I was ſilent.

She then enquired with more ſerioufneſs if there were any proſpect of peace. I was better pleaſed with this queſtion, as it implied

plied more anxiety for the lives of her fellow-creatures, than I had given her credit for. "I am anxiouſly looking into all the papers," continued ſhe, without giving me time to ſpeak, "becauſe as ſoon as there is peace, papa has promiſed we ſhall go to town again. If it was not for that I ſhould not care if there was war till doomſday, for what with marching regiments, and militia, and volunteers, nothing can be pleaſanter than it makes the country, I mean as far as the country *can* be pleaſant." They then ran over the names and reſpective merits of every opera ſinger, every dancer, and every actor, with incredible volubility; and I believe they were not a little ſhocked at my ſlender acquaintance with the nomenclature, and the little intereſt I took in the criticiſms they built upon it.

Poor Lady Aſton looked oppreſſed and fatigued, but inwardly rejoiced, as ſhe afterwards owned to me, that her daughters were not within hearing. I was of a different opinion, upon the Spartan prin-

ciple, of making their children ſober, by the ſpectacle of the intoxicated Helots. Miſs Bell's eloquence ſeemed to make but little impreſſion on Sir George; or rather it produced an effect directly contrary to admiration. His good taſte ſeemed to revolt at her flippancy. Every time I ſee this young man he riſes in my eſteem. His ingenuous temper and engaging modeſty ſet off to advantage a very fair underſtanding.

In our way home we were accoſted by Mr. Flam. After a rough but hearty ſalutation, and a cordial invitation to come and dine with him, he galloped off, being engaged on buſineſs. "This is an honeſt country 'ſquire of the old cut," ſaid Mr. Stanley afterwards. "He has a very good eſtate, which he has ſo much delight in managing, that he has no pleaſure in any thing elſe. He was prevailed on by his father to marry his preſent wife, for no other reaſon than becauſe her eſtate joined to his, and broke in a little on the *arrondiſſement;* but it was judged that both being united, all might be

be brought within a ring fence. This was thought a reaſon ſufficiently powerful for the union of two immortal beings, whoſe happineſs here and hereafter might be impeded or promoted by it! The felicity of the connection has been in exact proportion to the purity of the motive.

I could not forbear interrupting Mr. Stanley, by obſerving that nothing had ſurprized or hurt me more in the little obſervation I had made on the ſubject of marriage, than the frequent indifference of parents to the moral, and eſpecially to the religious character of the man who propoſed himſelf. "That family, fortune, and connections ſhould have their full ſhare in the buſineſs, I readily admit," added I; "but that it ſhould ever form the chief, often the only ground of acceptance, has, I confeſs, lowered mankind in my eſteem more completely, than almoſt any other inſtance of ambition, avarice, or worldlineſs. That a very young girl, who has not been carefully educated, ſhould be captivated by perſonal advantages, and even infa-

infatuated by ſplendour, is leſs ſurpriſing than that parents, who having themſelves experienced the inſufficiency of riches to happineſs—that they ſhould be eagerly impatient to part from a beloved daughter, reared with fondneſs at leaſt, if not with wiſdom, to a man of whoſe principles they have any doubt, and of whoſe mind they have a mean opinion, is a thing I cannot underſtand. And yet what propoſal almoſt is rejected on this ground?" Lucilla's eyes at this moment ſhone with ſuch expreſſive brightneſs, that I exultingly ſaid to myſelf, "Lord Staunton! I defy thee!"

"The miſchief of this lax principle is of wide extent," replied Mr. Stanley. "When girls are continually hearing what an advantageous, what a deſirable marriage ſuch a young friend has made with a man ſo rich, ſo ſplendid, ſo great; though they have been accuſtomed to hear this very man condemned for his profligacy perhaps, at leaſt they know him to be deſtitute of piety—when they hear that theſe things are not conſidered as any great objection to the union, what

what opinion muſt theſe girls form, not only of the maxims by which the world is governed, but of the truth of that religion which thoſe perſons profeſs?

"But to return to Mr. Flam. He paſſed through the uſual courſe of education, but has profited ſo little by it, that though he has a certain natural ſhrewdneſs in his underſtanding, I believe he has ſcarcely read a book theſe twenty years, except 'Burn's Juſtice' and 'The Agricultural Reports.' Yet when he wants to make a figure, he now and then lards his diſcourſe with a ſcrap of thread-bare Latin which he uſed to ſteal in his ſchool-boy exerciſes. He values himſelf on his integrity, and is not deſtitute of benevolence. Theſe, he ſays, are the ſum and ſubſtance of religion; and though I combat this miſtaken notion as often as he puts it in my power, yet I muſt ſay that ſome who make more profeſſion would do well to be as careful in theſe points. He often contraſts himſelf with his old friend Ned Tyrrel, and is proud of ſhewing how much better

a man he is without religion, than Ned is with all his pretenſions to it. It is by thus comparing ourſelves with worſe men, that we grow vain, and with more fortunate men, that we become diſcontented.

"All the concern he gives himſelf about his wife and daughter is, that they ſhall not run him in debt; and indeed he is ſo liberal, that he does not drive them to the neceſſity. In every thing elſe, they follow their own devices. They teazed him, however, to let them ſpend two or three winters in town, the mother hinting *that it would anſwer*. He was prevailed on to try it as a ſpeculation, but the experiment failed. He now inſiſts that they ſhall go no more till the times mend, to any of the advertiſing places, ſuch as London, Brighton, or Bath; he ſays, that attending ſo many fairs and markets is very expenſive, eſpecially as the girls don't go off. He will now ſee what can be done by private contract at home, without the coſt of journies, with freſh keep and trimming, and docking into the bar-

gain,

gain. They muſt now take their chance among country dealers; and provided they will give him a ſon-in-law, whoſe eſtate is free from incumbrances, who pays his debts, lives within his income, does not rack his tenants, never drinks claret, hates the French, and loves field ſports, he will aſk no more queſtions."

I could not but obſerve, how preferable the father's conduct, with all its faults, was to that of the reſt of the family. "I had imagined," ſaid I, "that this coarſe character was quite out of print. Though it is religiouſly bad, and of courſe morally defective, yet it is ſo politically valuable that I ſhould not be ſorry to ſee a new edition of theſe obſolete ſquires, ſomewhat corrected, and better lettered."

"All his good qualities," ſaid Mr. Stanley, "for want of religion have a flaw in them. His good nature is ſo little directed by judgment, that while it ſerves the individual, it injures the public. As a brother magiſtrate, I am obliged to act in almoſt conſtant

conſtant oppoſition to him, and his indiſcretions do more miſchief by being of a nature to increaſe his popularity. He is fully perſuaded that occaſional intoxication is the beſt reward for habitual induſtry; and inſiſts that it is good old Engliſh kindneſs, to make the church-ringers periodically tipſey at the holidays, though their families ſtarve for it the whole week. He and I have a regular conteſt at the annual village fairs, becauſe he inſiſts that my refuſing to let them begin on a Sunday is abridging their few rights, and robbing them of a day which they might add to their pleaſure, without injury to their profit. He allows all the ſtrolling players, mountebanks, and jugglers to exhibit, becauſe, he ſays it is a charity. His charity however is ſo ſhort-ſighted, that he does not ſee, that while theſe vagabonds are ſupplying the wants of the day, their improvident habits ſuffer them to look no farther. That his own workmen are ſpending their hard-earned money in theſe illegal

gal diverſions, while the expence is the leaſt miſchief which their daughters incur."

Our next viſit was to Mr. Carlton, whom I had found in one or two previous interviews to be a man of excellent ſenſe, and a perfect gentleman. Sir John renewed with pleaſure his acquaintance with the huſband, while Lady Belfield was charmed to be introduced to the wife, with whoſe character ſhe was ſo enamoured, and whoſe gentle manners were calculated to confirm the affection which her little hiſtory had inſpired.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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